More on the Death of JFK *Tad Szulc*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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ZEROING IN ON JIMMY CARTER

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The Man's Religion
E. Brooks Holifield

Reviews by Roger Stilling, Calvin Bedient, Clarence Brown, Reed Whittemore, Robin W. Winks, L. J. Davis, Rosellen Brown, William H. Pritchard

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TRB

from Washington
June 5, 1976

Gladhanding

Down the straight track depart President and Mrs. Ford, standing alone now on the platform of the receding train, waving back. . . .

"Did you get shook, did you get shook?" shrieks the trombonist of the Northeastern High School band. "No," squeaks the clarinetist of the rival Central High School band hysterically, "but I touched him! I touched him!"

All their lives they will remember it; it was like this for 50 years. Mr. Ford revived the Campaign Special one day in Michigan last month and took the supposedly "doubtful" state two-to-one. If he wants to take California, (winner-take-all, 167 GOP delegates June 8 and the nomination may hang on it) he will whistle-stop right down the state, Sacramento to Los Angeles, doing what he does best, mingling with people and gladhanding all the way.

You need a band. It tells patriotic things to crowds nothing else can, about Presidents and people, and fun and excitement, and America the beautiful and to hell with issues. There are four bands here for Ford, and they play in turn the Michigan University fight song, and the wonderful march from *The Music Man*—"Seventy-six Trombones"; and then there is big, honest, mediocre Jerry Ford in the flesh, waving; it stirs the blood, shakes off the miasma of this dreadful election; now we are back in an older tradition, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too," surely there is nothing wrong with a little festival folksiness.

Mr. Ford is talking and I knew what would happen though I had forgotten it—that decrepit old brewery building with broken windows across the railroad yard is talking back at him; of course it would, it always has, echoing and carrying on dialogues with candidates. That building or its twin moved all the way across the states at 20 stops a day when Harry Truman made his 1948 campaign.

"Did you actually sleep on the train? I mean—*sleep* on it?" a young reporter asks me.

Ha! It was 16 cars, including sleeping and dining coaches, with 80 or 100 newsmen aboard and at the end the *Ferdinand Magellan* with oversized rear platform and striped canopy and loudspeakers on top. We started on Thursday, June 3, 1948, says the schedule, which I have preserved, with a 1:32 a.m. service stop at Harrisburg ("Change crews, ice, water, inspection") and first speech at Crestline, Ohio, at 10:53, and so on to Chicago ("Drive to Palmer House and Stadium"). We steamed across Iowa and Nebraska and places like that, meeting great locomotives in lonely places coming the other way to Sunday services at Kearney where we sat in gothic pine pews, under the Roll of Honor, temperature 80 degrees Fahrenheit, with sunlight streaming through stained glass windows, and the minister said, "If God is on our side nothing else matters." I know because I scribbled soft pencil notes—"elevation 2149," "red axminster carpet" and "First Baptist church." I used the text of Mr. Truman's earlier "rear platform remarks at Grand Island, Nebraska" (June 6, 1948) for notes, where he received a peace pipe, a parcel of local beet sugar, and his third pair of spurs. He said, "These spurs are wonderful. When I get them on I can take the Congress to town. Give them a trial, just as soon as I get back to Washington."

Sparkling, eh? It is remarks like that that Jerry Ford is good at too, and at introducing his wife. Harry would say, "And now I want you to meet the Boss." Plump and matronly she would appear and he would proudly introduce her, and then say "And here's the one who bosses her," and radiant Margaret would step out, probably with an armful of roses, and there would be yells and wolf whistles, and who could vote against a family like *that*?

Truman told them at Grand Island that he would like to make a political speech but couldn't. Sunday, you know. Never on Sunday. The trip took us over the Missoula, Montana, pass, where we took on "the helper engine," and then dropped the locomotive off again at Pass Evaro, Montana.

Saturday, June 12, we were rolling down California—speaking, speaking all the way, 18 hours. Jerry Ford, take note.

Yes, it was fun . . . The train slows and telephone polls march slower. People gawking. There is a distant rhythmic throbbing, the band, "Hail to the Chief"!

Correspondents move from club car to platform and with easy familiarity swing back the iron doors and release the floor catch, which brings up the iron plate above the steps. Jump off at the band; where the band is the crowd is—and that's where the engineer will halt the rear platform.

The crowd stretches back a block and a half. Truman starts talking; which one will it be this time—about Grandfather Young and the covered wagon? No, this time after a brief plug for a federal health insurance program (imagine!—28 years ago Truman was urging it and still we alone of modern nations don't have it). He is telling unaffectedly of his great romance with The Boss: "She was five and I was six. I sat in front of her, and now and then she used to tap me over the head with a ruler."

(At Los Angeles, when he left the train, a million people saw him; pity he was going to lose; all the polls showed Dewey way ahead.)

The reporter at a whistle-stop jumped off the moving steps, raced the slowing train down the roped platform to the crowd around the band, had his yellow Western Union page against the dusty side of the *Ferdinand Magellan* at the first yell of the throng when the President appeared and was ready for the climax with the President spacing his words for emphasis and chip-chopping with his hands, "I am talking about the party that gave us that *no-account, do-nothing Republican 80th Congress*."

"Give 'em hell, Harry!" somebody shouts. The whistle toots four times. "Western, Western!" yells the reporter tossing the hasty copy to a messenger boy like throwing a fish to a gull. Away we go. It'll be a wonder if Truman stops at the Mexico line . . .

So there's my advice, Jerry. It's your secret weapon. I watched you and Betty on the special train that day in Michigan. You're good at it. A big smile. A big wave. A quick descent from the car, working the crowd. They roll away like a movie fade-out, down the shining tracks, you and Betty alone on the platform, exeunt waving. You want to win this election? You know how.

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Wary of Welfare

By common consent, welfare is not an issue in the 1976 campaign. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats want to make it one, even though the growth of welfare costs, like the growth of the prison population and the unemployed, is one of the singular achievements of the Ford administration. Why isn't it an issue? Presumably because the politicians don't want to talk about it. Jerry Ford is understandably reluctant to touch the subject because he might have to explain why he allowed welfare costs to rise 20 percent in 1975. Although he could charge, as he occasionally does, that rising social service costs are the consequence of bad policy made by Presidents before him, that's not the kind of answer that wins elections. If welfare did become a hot item, he would probably resort to uglier words. When cornered, fiscal conservatives lash out at chiselers and cheaters and Cadillac-driving parasites who live off public funds. The beneficiaries are blamed for rising costs, not the government. But this is a sleazy argument, and the President would just as soon skip it, since voters may not have the patience to listen to a welfare debate anyway.

The Democrats have put welfare aside for reasons of their own. Hubert Humphrey, speaking at a "leadership conference" of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies in Washington last week, said welfare is a dead issue just now. That is, he doesn't expect a reform bill to reach the President's desk before the election. The political atmosphere isn't right. It soured in 1972 and didn't recover. Liberal leaders in Congress failed to compromise with the conservatives on welfare in 1971, and thereupon scuttled the minimum income plan written by Daniel P. Moynihan and proposed by Richard Nixon. They preferred to wait for a Democratic President. Instead they got George McGovern. A large part of his fiasco was attributable to his endorsement of pure and uncompromising reform schemes like the "Demogrant" plan. This was welfare in the raw: free money. Every person of a certain age and below a certain income level was to receive a check from Uncle Sam. No caseworkers; no hassle. It was esthetically clean. But it was so badly received that McGovern dropped it in mid-campaign. It also did not seem to make much economic sense.

Since that defeat, the reformers have crept back to their cubicles to search for a better way to present their ideas. There's no enthusiasm for sweeping reform: "Dead as a doornail," a researcher at the Urban

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Institute in Washington said last week. But there are a number of technical refinements the experts would like to make. As long as these are presented in drab, laboratory language, it's thought, they won't attract the furor of the grandiose schemes of the early '70s.

One important proposal would make food stamps available to more of the working poor and remove "purchase barriers" that require food stamp users to buy their benefits in bi-weekly or monthly lump sums. (The poor can't save money for a week, much less a month. Many thus lose the chance to buy food stamps.) Another proposal would federalize the system of cash payments to poor families, called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Because states and local governments now bear the full administrative cost and one-third the cost of the cash handouts, AFDC is a mess. Standards vary from state to state, and so does the enthusiasm of welfare administrators. Some crabbed governments wish AFDC would disappear. And the generous ones, like the City of New York, become so swamped with poor families that they cannot carry on the routine business of government. Their budgets are torn apart, pulled from one end by increasing taxes and fleeing businesses, and from the other by steadily rising welfare costs. The remedy is to have a national standard for benefits and to set aside more federal money for big cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Detroit so that they do not become welfare sinkholes.

The people who actually run welfare programs--governors, mayors and county officials--know that tinkering of the kind mentioned above would only begin to solve their problems. It would help financially, but it wouldn't clear away the bureaucratic mess, which is just as despised as the funding system. (It's no accident that the only candidates speaking out explicitly for welfare reform this year are former officials—Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. Others endorse it, but not so ostentatiously.) Gail Moran, an official of the National Governors Conference who deals with welfare problems, said last week "there's no sympathy at the federal level" for the governors' desire to have a comprehensive reform bill: "When we go to the Hill they look at us like we're crazy." Moran said that neither Rep. Al Ullman, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, nor Sen. Russell Long, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, expressed an interest in their ideas. Washington has bigger things on its mind.

Last week, Humphrey spoke passionately of federal programs to aid the poor, and of his role in sponsoring many of them. He ran down the list of flaws in the welfare system: the variations in benefits that lure people to welfare havens, the rule that prevents fathers from living at home and receiving aid, the confusion that in some places makes it more profitable to go on welfare than to accept a job and the misuse of unemployment insurance to support a brand new generation of welfare recipients. But the focus of his speech was jobs. Repair the damage Ford has done to the economy, put people to work, and then attack welfare, Humphrey said. "We can make the reform of income support much more manageable if we undertake it in a climate of full employment." And this led to the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, or the "Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act" as it's properly called, which has supplanted all other issues, including welfare, as the great cause of the year.

In brief, Humphrey-Hawkins would force the government to attack economic problems in a positive way rather than permit it to wait passively for the corporations to do something. People out of work would be given jobs or job training. The government would be required to make long-range economic plans, just as big corporations do. The President would have to coordinate federal spending and banking plans, and seek congressional approval for speeding or slowing the rate of economic growth. Humphrey is convinced that a strong leader could cure the economy, and he said so: "There's no reason in God's green earth why the United States should specialize in high unemployment rates." He brushed aside a question from the President of the US Chamber of Commerce, who was worried about the government's meddling in market forces: "The Constitution doesn't mention market forces, nor does the Declaration of Independence, nor the Old or New Testament. But they do mention something about justice . . ." He blasted the "high priests of finance" for "sitting around and saying it can't be done."

Jimmy Carter, by contrast, is as cool as a cucumber. We haven't seen him speak on the subject, but his published statements reveal him to be cautious and flexible when he talks about burning social issues. At first he refused to endorse the Humphrey-Hawkins bill because he said it promised too much too fast—a four percent decline in national unemployment in 18 months, for example. He said the early version would have made the Labor Department the "employer of first resort." Later, after the bill had been scaled down to modest proportions (the 18 month goal is now to be reached in four years) and the federal role in providing jobs had been modified, Carter endorsed it. But he still views it skeptically. He told *Business Week* in May that "whenever there is a choice between channeling jobs in the private sector or the public, I would favor the private." (It's interesting to see that Carter isn't the only Democrat who feels this way. Candidate Frank Church, who's done well in recent primaries, also speaks cautiously. He said of Humphrey-Hawkins: "I don't think it is any long-term solution because we don't want the government in the role . . . of providing permanent jobs.")

The point is that no matter how they shade their opinions, all the leading Democratic candidates—even the anti-Washington variety—see the problem in the

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same way and promise to attack it similarly. First they would use the spending and banking power of the government to stimulate the economy, then they would give government jobs and subsidized private jobs to those still out of work and, finally, they would give cash support (welfare) to the aged, the disabled and parents who are poor and must stay home to care for young children. Implicit in this is a drastic overhaul of the entire welfare system.

Population Explosion

America's prisons are crowded as they have never been before. Prisoners are overflowing into camps, ships, halfway houses and probation programs at an alarming rate, and today there is literally no place to put the new convicts as they leave the courtroom. The result has been to increase the risks for society and to raise the likelihood of bloody prison riots like the one that occurred a few years ago at Attica in New York, to say nothing of the increase in suffering for those on the inside. Because the crowding problem is already severe, judges, wardens and parole boards are stretching the rules to their limits by releasing criminals sooner, sentencing more to terms of probation rather than incarceration, packing two or three people into one-person cells, continuing to use ancient facilities that should be closed down and generally taking emergency measures that they shouldn't have to take.

According to Mike Aun, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Prisons, the total US prison population increased 11 percent last year, and already in the first four months of 1976 the federal population has gone up eight percent. The federal system alone houses 21 percent more than its full capacity and is receiving new convicts at the rate of about 100 a week. The leap in the statistical charts didn't come as a complete surprise, Aun says. Last fall he read an article by John Flanagan of the University of Wisconsin titled, "The Imminent Crisis in Prison Populations" predicting a new flood of convicts. Flanagan said the crisis was the result of several things: the coming of age of the baby boom, the hardening of public attitudes toward criminals that has made for longer prison sentences, an increase in the proportion of violent criminals who cannot be probated or paroled and lastly the rise in unemployment. After reading the article, Aun began collecting news clips about prison crowding around the country, and now his file is very thick.

Texas, with beds for 19,500, expects to have at least 21,000 prisoners by the end of the year. Florida has more than 200 prisoners living in tents. Louisiana and Maryland are converting old ships into prisons, as Britain did in the 19th century. Maryland's commissioner of corrections, Mark Levine, told a reporter, "It's a fine balancing act; we live day by day." He predicted that by July every probation officer in the state would be responsible for watching 233 probated convicts (up from 183 at the beginning of the year). In Massachusetts the prison population rose 55 percent in six months. A Tennessee women's prison is crowding three convicts into each cell. The commissioner of corrections in New Hampshire says the problem has reached "a crisis stage," and the one in Maine, noting that the state keeps 400 convicts in a prison designed for 250, says the atmosphere is "explosive." The story is the same everywhere, only a bit worse in the South than in the North and Midwest.

What will happen? A simple solution would be to build more prisons. And that is being done—slowly. Several hundred prison construction plans are in progress around the country, and the federal Bureau of Prisons this year is pushing for new construction funds. It's difficult to get approval for prison building in many cases because taxpayers don't want to spend money on housing criminals when so many other positive programs need funding. It's also hard to find a site. No one wants a prison in his neighborhood. In addition, lobbies like the National Moratorium on Prison Construction have successfully opposed new prisons for several years on political grounds. The moratorium has persuaded Congress not to appropriate federal funds in the past on the theory that this would force the government to come up with new ideas and look at more humane alternatives to jail. Faced with a crisis this year, however, the House Appropriations Committee voted to build four new federal institutions: a "youth facility" in the Southeast, an adult prison in Otisville, New York, and two metropolitan "detention centers" in Michigan and Arizona to hold people charged with, but not yet convicted of, federal crimes. In days gone by, local jails used to hold these prisoners on contract for the feds, but now there's no room there either.

Even if the prisons bill makes its way through the many barriers that lie ahead, it won't relieve the pressure on the system. According to Mike Aun, it takes five years to build a big prison, and the largest of the four being considered at the moment would house 500 inmates. Furthermore, the policy is to make prisons smaller in the future. Yet prisoners are being churned out of the courts at a rate of about 100 a week, and if the statisticians are right, the criminal population will continue to grow until 1985. That's when the postwar baby boom will be in full flower—between ages 20 and 30 when people are most prone to commit crimes. Building prisons to lock up thousands more Americans, therefore, is not only repugnant, but economically wasteful and technically unfeasible.

There are other approaches. The first step in a sensible attack on crime is to reduce the unemployment rate; that goes without saying. Even the Bureau of Prisons knows this. The bureau released a study in

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March 1975 comparing the unemployed population with the prison population and found that, "When unemployment of males 20 and over goes up or down, the population of the Federal Prison System usually follows the same pattern, allowing for a time lag of 15 months." The two statistical curves, when placed together on a chart, are virtually identical.

To cope with the immediate housing problem, the director of federal prisons, Norman Carlson, suggested to US wardens in May that they put more prisoners in camps and halfway houses. The federal system now runs 10 camps—low-security housing projects with no surrounding fence—and 16 halfway houses. The bureau also recommended that wardens make more use of state and privately owned halfway houses, of which there are about 500 that might have room to house new convicts. This would be a plum for private jailers, at $20 per day per prisoner. There is some reluctance to follow this advice, however, because wardens know that the proportion of criminals convicted of violent crime is rising, they know that of the 913 federal prisoners who escaped last year, only 173 escaped from secure prisons. But in truth they have few alternatives. The bureau, which had hoped to release 65 percent of its convicts into halfway programs by 1978 (the figure is now 40 percent), has decided to shorten its schedule. It's aiming for a 65 percent release rate immediately.

Eliot Marshall

An Eye for an Eye?

The Death of JFK

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency engaged in a cover-up of highly relevant information when the Warren Commission was investigating President John Kennedy's assassination in 1963 and 1964. President Lyndon Johnson and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy became party to the effort which consisted of withholding key facts from the Warren Commission. The cover-up continues even now 12 years later; the FBI still refuses to turn over to congressional investigators some of its most sensitive files on the killing of JFK.

The Warren Commission was never told that Attorney General Kennedy secretly formed—*before* his brother was killed—a special intergovernmental committee, which included FBI and CIA representatives, to look into the possibility that Cuba's Premier Fidel Castro might organize attempts on the lives of high United States government officials. That this committee existed has been kept secret although information about it reposes in FBI files.

The top-secret committee was created by Robert Kennedy presumably out of concern that Castro might retaliate against CIA attempts on his life, carried out directly by the agency's operatives and with help from the Mafia. That anti-Castro assassination plots were afoot in the early 1960s was unknown at the time (they were disclosed last year by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities) and the Warren Commission was not told of them. Only Allen W. Dulles, who had been CIA director, had knowledge of the anti-Castro plots. In its ignorance the commission couldn't search more intensively into the possible motives of Lee Harvey Oswald in killing the President. The commission had concluded that Oswald was the lone assassin in Dallas, but it acknowledged its inability to come up with the motive.

It does not follow, of course, that the Warren Commission would surely have traced Oswald's motives had it known of the anti-Castro conspiracies and of the establishment of Robert Kennedy's secret group some time before Dallas. There is still no proof that Castro was behind Oswald. But the cover-up made it impossible for the commission to seriously pursue a line of inquiry in this area even though there had been much discussion of the significance of Oswald's links with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (a pro-Castro group in the United States) and his aborted efforts to go to Cuba two months before he killed JFK.

Robert Kennedy, the CIA and the FBI decided to keep from the Warren Commission the fact that a special group had been set up to protect American leaders from possible *Cuban* assassination plots. To justify its existence, it would have been necessary to expose the CIA's own conspiracies against Castro. These were among the most closely held secrets of the Kennedy-Johnson period. That the CIA failed to inform the Warren Commission of anti-Castro plots—even though the agency was under presidential orders to provide maximum assistance to the commission—was confirmed in a memo on April 20, 1975 written by CIA inspector general Donald F. Chamberlain to CIA deputy director E.H. Knoche. It said: "As far as we can tell from all of the materials at our disposition, no one discussed with the Warren Commission any alleged plan to assassinate Castro. There is also no evidence that anyone known to our records made a decision *not* to tell the Warren Commission anything about this topic or any other matter." Chamberlain added that "we have no evidence in our material indicating Castro's knowledge or the possession of documentation of alleged assassination plots directed against him."

Two days later, on April 22, 1975, Raymond G. Rocca, then deputy chief of the CIA's counterintelligence staff, informed Knoche that "our records show at every point a marked intent to make as much available to the [Warren Commission] as was consistent with the security of the ongoing

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operations." Rocca also reported that his files do not show whether the Warren Commission was informed of a 1962 report from the CIA's station in Guatemala according to which a statement was made at a Guatemalan Communist party meeting that "we need not preoccupy ourselves over the politics of President Kennedy because we know, according to prognostication, that he will die within the present year."

Although, as Rocca put it, the counterintelligence staff was the CIA's "working-level point of contact with the Warren Commission," plans to assassinate Castro were not "known to us in CIA staff."

In all likelihood, President Johnson, who knew of the anti-Castro plotting, also knew that Robert Kennedy had set up his special committee. But there is no indication that he shared that knowledge with Chief Justice Earl Warren when the commission was organized in November 1963. Robert Kennedy's testimony before the Warren Commission likewise omitted mention of his own fears that assassinations might breed assassinations. But it is part of the public record that Johnson subsequently commented, without elaborating, that President Kennedy might have been killed in retaliation for his administration's anti-Castro policies. At the time, this remark was taken to mean possible retaliation for the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and subsequent CIA operations against Cuba.

All these facts, secret at the time, may have influenced the Kennedy family in its decision to oppose any reopening of the assassination probe. Again, a new investigation might have led to public disclosures of the CIA plotting and tarnishing the memory of John and Robert Kennedy.

Robert Kennedy's interest in aggressive operations against Cuba was reported in a document written by John McCone, then CIA director, on October 4, 1962, describing a top-level strategy meeting chaired by the attorney general. McCone wrote that "the attorney general reported on discussions with the President on Cuba; dissatisfied with lack of action in the sabotage field, went on to stress that nothing was moving forward, commented that one effort attempted had failed . . ."

Another element of the cover-up was that in at least 50 instances the CIA had, according to an internal FBI memo, ignored materials supplied by the bureau on Oswald's foreign connections. The responsibility for following up such FBI leads was in the hands of an ad hoc group built around the CIA's so-called "D Staff," a clandestine operations center then headed by William Harvey, a senior agency official. The CIA's counterintelligence office, directed by James Angleton, reported directly to Harvey's "D staff," and it too was involved in investigating certain aspects of the Kennedy assassination. Sources contend that the CIA actually destroyed some of the materials provided by the FBI. Angleton, according to those sources, may have suspected Soviet "plants" in the FBI material. The Warren Commission never knew about any of it.

As has been reported earlier, the FBI destroyed at least one letter Oswald sent to the Dallas police department shortly before the assassination. Oswald demanded that the FBI stop "harassing" his Russian-born wife Marina and threatened to blow up the Dallas police headquarters if the FBI failed to desist. This became known only last year, and the FBI never offered a conclusive explanation for destroying the note. Likewise, the FBI inexplicably failed to place Oswald on its "dangerous list" although it did so with other members of the Fair Play Committee.

A CIA memorandum to the Rockefeller Commission, which last year investigated CIA abuses, said that the agency still feels, as it did in 1964, that the Warren Commission should have given more credence in its final report to the possibility of foreign links in the conspiracy against Kennedy. The memo said that there were promising leads that were not followed up. This statement contradicts the FBI memorandum now in the possession of the Senate Select Committee that the CIA refused to pursue leads obtained by the bureau. However, acute rivalry between the CIA and the FBI already existed at the time—they actually stopped cooperating altogether in 1970—and their estrangement could account for the contradictions.

The cover-up is among the reasons the Senate Select Committee voted on May 13 to recommend a congressional inquiry into the role of the intelligence agencies in the Warren Commission investigation, and into Oswald's motives.

The Senate committee first learned of the cover-up a few months ago. This is the new evidence the panel claims it has obtained about Oswald's motives. Sen. Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania and Sen. Gary Hart of Colorado, who constitute a special subcommittee on the Kennedy assassination, have written a separate report on the subject. Neither Schweiker nor Hart has publicly revealed thus far the nature of the new evidence—the cover-up. There is said to be great pressure to sanitize this report while the full secret information would be turned over to the Senate's new permanent oversight committee on intelligence or whatever other panel might undertake the recommended investigation of the Kennedy death. The subcommittee report is expected to be issued in mid-June after the FBI and the CIA have inspected it to remove what they may consider "embarrassing" information.

Although senators are far from certain that the proposed inquiry would actually provide a conclusive answer about Oswald's motives—the trail has become cold in the opinion of many senators—the FBI and the CIA could find themselves under charges of obstruction of justice for having withheld significant material from the Warren Commission.

Among the questions likely to be raised in a new

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investigation is why Dulles concealed from the Warren Commission, on which he served, the plotting against Castro by the CIA. CIA's own records, released in mid-May, show that the agency had begun to plan Castro's assassination in March 1960, when Dulles was CIA director, and planning had by then begun for the Bay of Pigs. Excerpts from transcripts of the Warren Commission's executive sessions (published in *The New Republic* on Sept. 27, 1975) show that Dulles informed his colleagues that there were certain CIA secrets that he would keep from everybody except the President of the United States. Dulles was addressing the still unclarified question of whether Oswald, as maintained by some assassination buffs, had been an undercover FBI informer.

A similar question could be raised with John McCone who was CIA director during the Warren Commission investigations and who should be called to testify in any new Senate inquiry. McCone was familiar with the anti-Castro plots and probably knew about Robert Kennedy's secret committee.

All the indications are that the existence of this committee was known to very few people: Robert Kennedy himself, probably Dulles and McCone, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, and a few selected associates. Several aides of Robert Kennedy, including a former assistant director of the FBI, said in interviews last week that they had not known of the committee. They said, however, that it was possible that the group, acting in secrecy, worked out of the White House before and after the Kennedy assassination or from the attorney general's office.

The Senate Intelligence Committee learned of the cover-up in the course of its long investigation of the intelligence community. After references were made by witnesses to the Robert Kennedy committee in testimony touching on foreign assassination plots by the CIA, the Church Committee asked the FBI and the CIA for their relevant files. It is understood that the CIA made some material available; the FBI refused to do so for many months. Only recently did the bureau agree to allow Senate committee members to read parts of its secret files, but the senators have to do it at FBI headquarters.

It was in this manner that senators learned of the scope of the cover-up by the intelligence agencies. They've now requested additional materials from the FBI. Some senators are said to believe that further vital information on the Kennedy assassination investigation may turn up in the FBI files.

It remains unclear why, after 12 years, the FBI is still reluctant to let senators see all its files on the assassinations. There are no indications that the bureau has been under any pressure from the White House—President Ford was a member of the Warren Commission—to withhold material from the Senate. In fact, Ford himself may be unaware of the contents of the FBI files. That raises again a fundamental question: is the White House in full control of the intelligence agencies?

Tad Szulc

A is for Anybody, B is for But, C is for Carter

Is He Stoppable?

by Ken Bode

Discussing a legislative cabal he had masterminded in Louisiana, Earl Long remarked, "You know, the Bible says that before the end of time, billy goats, tigers, rabbits and house cats are all going to sleep together. Well, my gang looks like the Bible proposition is here." Jimmy Carter, a Southern politician of a newer sort, talks about cabals too, but in different terms. "They're ganging up on me," is the way Carter puts it—"they" meaning Morris Udall, Frank Church and Jerry Brown (with Hubert Humphrey, and maybe even Teddy Kennedy cheering them on). What Jimmy means is that the remaining Democratic presidential contenders have come to the common conclusion that by running everywhere, Carter is spreading himself and his money very thin. These men are exploiting that vulnerability by choosing not to ape the frontrunner's strategy. They are concentrating on one primary at a time, they are consolidating the anti-Carter vote and winning themselves some primaries. Carter's "ganging up" remarks reminded some people that he spent months before the Florida primary persuading other contenders to pass up that skirmish, in effect, assuring himself a head-to-head battle with George Wallace; in a two man contest, Carter's prospects of winning were

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much enhanced.

Historically, it's not uncommon for frontrunners suddenly to find that they face a concerted opposition. In 1960, John Kennedy eliminated his only active rival, Hubert Humphrey, then ran through about 10 consecutive primary victories. Nevertheless, by convention time, Kennedy discovered a coalition of his opponents promoting two-time loser Adlai Stevenson as the most nominatable alternative to JFK from among their ranks. Collusion among active candidates is quite common, even when they don't seem to agree on substantive issues. In 1968, for example, Nelson Rockefeller and Ronald Reagan made a deal that both would stay in the GOP race through Miami Beach in a two-front effort to deprive Richard Nixon of a first-ballot nomination. George McGovern's string of primary wins and his bulging lead in delegates didn't give a moment's pause to the organizers of the movement to block his nomination in '72. In other words, Jimmy Carter's problem is nothing new; he can take cheer in the fact that, despite everything, Kennedy, Nixon and McGovern all got nominated.

Carter himself has had some experience on the other side of some late-blooming "stop" movements. Four years ago when George McGovern was in delegate strength about where Carter is today, Carter and one of his advisers, Charlie Kirbo, then the Democratic state chairman in Georgia, began to take soundings for a stop-McGovern effort. "We're going to stop him," Carter told reporters on May 24, 1972, the day after McGovern won the Oregon and Rhode Island primaries. In the ensuing days, Carter and Kirbo reported to the Atlanta press that they had made entreaties to Democratic officials in 25 states to block McGovern. "I'm in contact with governors outside the South and we're all in one accord," Kirbo said. "McGovern is not going to get that damn nomination."

Just before the showdown primary in California, McGovern interrupted his schedule and flew to Houston for a secret meeting with Democratic governors. There, Carter sought what he termed a "concession to the South," that is, an agreement by McGovern to support a change in the provision of the Voting Rights Act that requires special civil rights enforcement in Southern states because of the historical pattern of discrimination in the South. Such a change was endorsed by most Southern senators in Washington, but unanimously opposed by civil rights types. McGovern refused to deal and Carter continued to press his opposition to the South Dakotan through the national convention, giving the nominee only lukewarm support in the general election.

What Carter now faces is far less cohesive than the roadblocks in McGovern's path four years ago. Nevertheless, the latest primary results—Carter's thin wins in Connecticut and Michigan along with his string of losses outside the South (in Nebraska, Maryland, Idaho, Nevada and Oregon) have revived the idea that the Georgian can be stopped. Without asking Hubert's permission this time, former New York state chairman Joe Crangle and Illinois Rep. Paul Simon have started a Draft Humphrey Committee. With the help of former Udall, Bayh and Jackson staffers, they have begun to gather intelligence on who the uncommitted delegates are and whom those pledged to inactive contenders will favor when legal mandates begin to expire, and what a second ballot might look like if Carter is fading and Humphrey makes his move. Without knowing whether Humphrey would end up the consensus alternative (it might be Kennedy or somebody else) the organizers of this embryonic movement to derail Carter have staked out a plan designed to deny him a first ballot nomination; Carter no doubt has a counter strategy.

For a time it was assumed that the only way Carter could lose was to do something unpardonably stupid: "If he doesn't turn out to be Caligula, the nomination is his," said one Humphrey intimate after Pennsylvania. But his recent setbacks have slowed Carter's valuable momentum, and the first objective of the Anybody But Carter (ABC) group is to assure that the front-runner comes out of the primaries wobbly. One big difference between McGovern's 1972 path to the nomination and Carter's this year lies in the pace of their finish. Carter peaked early and now finds himself in a fade; McGovern swept his last six primaries, gathering 441 more delegates to his opponents' 28.

Primary losses fuel misgivings, particularly among the Democratic establishment where the only appeal of an avowed outsider like Carter had been his evident electability. Nothing tarnishes visions of ultimate victory more than defeat, and since Brown and Church entered, Carter is zero-for-five against them.

Of the six remaining primaries, Carter is now favored to win Ohio and South Dakota, to lose California (to Brown) and Montana (to Church), and he is given an even chance of being first in New Jersey and Rhode Island. To keep Carter stalled will necessitate further one-to-one confrontations; Udall, Church and Brown are being urged by the ABC organizers to concentrate their campaigns where early polls and local support indicate each is strongest. Their best hope is that Carter will lose all three primaries on June 8—to Brown in California, to Udall in Ohio and to the uncommitted (leaning-Humphrey, leaning-Brown) state party slate headed by Sen. Harrison Williams in New Jersey. If there is no tacit cooperation among the other candidates—and agreement seems most improbable in the two most important states, Ohio and New Jersey—they risk restoring Carter's winner's image, just when it will do him the most good.

The next objective of ABC will be to keep uncommitted delegates from moving to Carter. Wherever possible, they will promote drift toward someone else; boosting hope of an active Humphrey effort after June 8 or a future Kennedy candidacy are obvious way

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stations for the uncommitted and a prime function of Crangle's operation. He now estimates that if uncommitteds vote their first preference, Humphrey will have more than 300 votes when the roll is called.

There are signs that Carter's diminished support in primaries was translated promptly into a dwindling of movement to his candidacy in district and state conventions. In the caucus-convention states that have chosen delegates thus far, Carter is running behind the totals accumulated by McGovern four years ago, and uncommitted slates are running well ahead of previous performance. In 10 recent days, Carter picked up about 70 delegates from Colorado, Missouri, Vermont, Virginia and Washington, about a third less than expected. He was especially slowed in Missouri where the endorsement of Sen. Thomas Eagleton produced fewer delegates than promised.

If Carter is to be stopped, this situation has to continue. "Any serious attrition in the ranks of the uncommitted and it's over," says one veteran of the move to stop McGovern.

There are two other important differences between Stop-McGovern four years ago and Stop-Carter today. First, 1972 was a year in which the Democratic party was clearly polarized, both on ideology and style. The cleavages were apparent to all, and results from all over the country confirmed the commonly accepted view that the party had no center; the peace movement was on one side, with most of labor and the party establishment on the other. This year, in terms of votes, delegates, endorsements, campaign rhetoric and almost every other standard that can be applied, Jimmy Carter's ascendancy is proof that the sharp ideological edges are gone and the cultural issues are submerged; he embodies the party's center. Absent the polarization and the intensity of feeling of '72, it may be difficult to achieve critical mass for a successful "stop" movement. The top levels of Meany-loyal labor and their political operatives provided the determination and the muscle of the effort to block McGovern; now they are involved in only a peripheral way. "That bunch really turned the screws in 1972," says one labor insider. Explaining this year's AFL-CIO decision not to take part in ABC, he alludes to what may prove Carter's greatest asset: "He's not Meany's first choice nor even his second. But Carter is *not sufficiently unacceptable.*"

A second important difference between Stop-McGovern and Stop-Carter is the absence of a mechanism to diminish Carter's strength after the primaries have ended. Challenges to delegate credentials as a means of changing the political complexion of a convention are a tactic commonly employed by all factions of both parties. In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower's managers rallied a series of delegate contests to strip away votes already committed to Robert Taft. And four years ago a challenge to McGovern's 271-member winner-take-all California delegation was the linchpin of the Stop-McGovern strategy.

After the furor that accompanied the '72 challenge, the Democrats adopted procedures designed to forestall such last minute contests, whether they be politically or otherwise motivated. Each state has now submitted for review its delegate selection plan to a special commission. Once approved, these plans are technically not subject to challenge. Further, the ABC leadership says it currently contemplates no challenges to Carter delegates. If lines harden inside the convention, that could lead to a standoff, which would probably benefit Jimmy Carter. His delegates are presumably Carter loyalists approved by the candidate and his staff in advance of accreditation. Even if binding instructions run out, their numbers can be expected to remain relatively firm until Carter personally releases them, that is, until he is no longer a candidate. Thus, without credentials contests, stopping Carter may be very difficult to do.

Carter has a lot of good cards in his hand. Even if one presumes that Carter will do poorly in the remaining primaries, how far from the nomination will he be?

Among candidates, TV networks and the rest of the press, there are always a dozen discrepant delegate projections floating about at any given moment. None ever jibes completely with any other, but with 1505 needed for nomination nearly all estimates now bring Carter out of the primaries with a prospective low of 1100 delegates and a high of just over 1200, depending on the final day's outcome. In either case, he will have roughly three times more than anyone else.

There are several places that Carter can go to assemble the balance, and any number of items—the vice presidency, cabinet spots and total discretion about where and how the $22 million in federal monies will be spent in the fall campaign—available to him as chits with which to bargain for delegates.

Carter says he is reluctant to horsetrade, and that he will make no bargain that can't be made public. He is merely acknowledging that any deals he makes and keeps will be obvious to everybody. In any case, Carter's initial list of vice presidential possibilities, released several weeks ago, showed him to be quite able to trade a horse if the need arises. On the list were three prominent, popular Democrats from the three June 8 primary states—John Glenn from Ohio (152 delegates), Peter Rodino from New Jersey (108) and (before he joined the active opposition) Jerry Brown (280).

Carter might go to Jerry Brown or Morris Udall with an offer of the vice presidency. Neither man is likely to be the beneficiary of a convention deadlock, and if either could be sure of delivering his delegates, he might prefer to settle for a firm second spot offer from Carter to the longer odds involved in holding out at the risk of gaining nothing. Another delegate-producing vice presidential possibility is Sen. Adlai Stevenson, III of Illinois, in whose name Mayor Daley is holding nearly 100 votes available to be switched to Carter on

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the first ballot. As I have suggested in this space before ("The Ideal Ticket," May 8) such an alliance makes eminent sense: it strengthens the Democratic ticket in Illinois at a time when Daley needs a boost; it gives Carter a running mate with credentials to complement his own (Midwest,urban, industrial), and along with the mayor's votes, it wins Daley's party influence and could stymie further Stop-Carter activity.

There are a good many places a frontrunner can go to pick up delegates in large chunks, little clusters or even one at a time. Pennsylvania has 45 uncommitted delegates who might be interested in talking about a cabinet job for Gov. Shapp, for example. In West Virginia, Sen. Robert Byrd has 33 delegates and his eye on the Senate majority leadership. There are loose blocs of 10 to 15 votes controlled by governors or state chairmen in a dozen states, a handful of right-to-lifers among the 17 uncommitted in Minnesota, and delegates nominally bound to Bayh, Harris, Shriver, Jackson and other now inactive candidates. All of them are potentially available, especially if Carter comes to Madison Square Garden with something left of his early allure. One place Carter cannot go to consolidate his nomination is to the 150 or so Wallace votes from Southern and border states, not, at least, if the nomination is to mean anything.

Right now the name of the game is public perception. The weaker his primary opponents seem, the weaker Carter looks either in winning or losing, and most now consider Church, Brown and Udall a common holding action; few believe that any of them will be nominated.

So Crangle and company have two additional jobs cut out for themselves. First, they must overcome the perception that the Democrats have to nominate the man who wins the most primaries and has the most delegates, even though that fellow may have lost several key contests in the final days. Carter's publicists will surely attempt to capitalize on that spirit. Secondly, someone must begin to make it legitimate for a deadlocked convention to turn to Hubert Humphrey. Syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft says that a Humphrey nomination would look like "the rawest of raw deals." Why? Does he really believe Hubert is fuzzy on the issues and no one knows what he thinks? Or because his record of public service is undistinguished or less than enough to prove his mettle? Or because he has no constituency in the party and lacks the respect of its leadership in or outside Washington?

With Carter at a stand-off in the primaries, talk about psychological momentum, speculation about slippage and stalling and a few mirror tricks are sufficient to hold the line. After June 8, however, the Draft Humphrey movers must have an active candidate or the uncommitteds and party leaders hanging on to little clusters of votes will grow very edgy about not being with a front-runner, albeit one who has showed signs of slowing in the final turn.

"Whenever I hear about a stop X movement getting together at a convention, I know that X is about to be nominated," observed a reporter when he learned of the conspiracy against John Kennedy at the 1960 convention. Whether Joe Crangle's current plans have the same prospects depend more than anything else on the outcome of the last battery of primaries. Success also hinges on how able Carter turns out to be as an intra-party diplomat in the next days. He is a man with some fences to mend, and Democrats of every stripe have come slowly to the realization that the nomination of Jimmy Carter of Georgia could determine the direction of the Democratic party for years to come.

Looking Forward to President Carter

by Simon Lazarus and Harry Huge

Some liberal writers—and voters—appear to view the rise of Jimmy Carter with contempt and anxiety. *The New Republic* has used very harsh terms to describe Carter. Bob Shrum, briefly a speechwriter with the Carter campaign, asserted that the former Georgia governor is not "human." Joseph Kraft called him a "pig in a poke." Even David Broder, normally the most clear-eyed of observers, has claimed to be unable to distinguish Carter from the other non-Washington Democrat—Jerry Brown—despite the polar differences between their respective gubernatorial records. Carter's regime in Georgia was, as *New York Times*

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correspondent James T. Wooten recently discovered to his own evident surprise, "most certainly an activist administration," animated by "a zealous instinct for reform. . . ." In contrast, Jerry Brown made his mark in California by celebrating administrative inaction and, in particular, by generally deriding social programs because they "are devoted to trying to prop up failures in society."

Despite Brown's casual indifference to the beneficiaries of social programs, the liberal Democratic electorate of Montgomery County, Maryland preferred him two-to-one over Carter in the May 18 primary. And elsewhere—in Lincoln, Ann Arbor, Madison, for example—similar communities have bypassed Carter for candidates who, while earnest and able, are unlikely to be nominated and then elected.

Of course, Carter remains the front-runner among the Democrats. Still the distrust, or distaste, of liberals, especially in the press, has marred Carter's national stature, hampered his drive for the nomination, and, if he is nominated, may hurt the Democratic party's November prospects.

As sometime contributors to this magazine, and general supporters of its progressive views, we have been troubled by the negative reaction to Jimmy Carter. (Both of us are supporters of his campaign.) To us, liberal opposition to Carter is puzzling, in the first place, because he appears plainly to be the candidate most likely, from a practical standpoint, to advance liberal concerns. Unlike Hubert Humphrey, his only real rival for the nomination, Carter should be a strong favorite to win in November, and thereafter to secure nationwide backing for his programs. And a Carter victory should make 1976 a watershed year. It could change the face of American politics as significantly as any election since 1932. It will refute Kevin Phillips' forecast of a new, enduring politics of reaction, centered in the sunbelt and animated by racism and related social insecurities.

Phillips' theory seemed confirmed by the 1968 and 1972 elections. Democrats came up with no systematic response to it, other than by Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg—a me-too strategy like that pursued by post-New Deal moderate Republicans, when liberal Democrats held the ideological initiative. But enter Carter, from the hardcore of Phillips' America. He would be the first President elected from the deep South since Zachary Taylor. If nominated, he should win most—perhaps all—of the South's 150-plus electoral votes—enough so that the Democrats would need in addition just three or four industrial states to win.

The price for the Southern strategy, however, is hardly a sellout on civil rights. Indeed, other than the South, Carter's most reliable constituency is *blacks*. His TV commercials emphasize that "My daughter goes to a typical South Georgia school—about 60 percent of her classmates are black and about 40 percent are white," and that "I have always believed that the best thing to happen to the South in my lifetime was the passage of the Civil Rights Acts." He visits black Baptist congregations, and acknowledges to them that their children could not expect the same justice from a Georgia court that his children are assured. He physically embraces Martin Luther King, Sr., on national television and gratefully accepts his *forgiveness* for his "ethnic purity" gaffe.

None of this is unknown to anyone following the 1976 campaign. But its historical significance seems to be overlooked. The years 1968 and 1972, it now appears, were only a brief thermidor. Despite the demise of the labor-ethnic bloc, a popular base can be forged for reinstating the progressive direction of national politics. When Carter appeals to the popular yearning into which he has tapped, to "heal the divisions that exist among our people," he is in part telling his audience to put aside their own prejudices.

Such talk is often dismissed as empty demagoguery. But, it makes sense in the cultural milieu of evangelical Protestantism. What counts is that here is a leader using the cultural traditions of the rural South to establish a politics of love—to replace the politics of hate, which was the stock-in-trade of his predecessors, from Bilbo to Wallace. As William Lee Miller observed in a perceptive Op. Ed. article in *The Washington Post* concerning Carter's Baptism, "the political fallout from the religious belief is likely not to be an avoidance of, but an encouragement to, social justice and sympathy with the poor."

For race relations in this country, the emergence of this new political idiom is a quantum leap. President John Kennedy talked to Americans about racial inequality in terms of numbers. "The Negro baby born in America today," he said after Medgar Evers was murdered in Jackson, "has about half as much chance of completing high school as a white baby . . . twice as much chance of becoming unemployed. . . . a life expectancy which is seven years shorter. . . ." Kennedy argued that the public should support civil rights legislation, because it would take the black movement off the streets and put it in the courts. President Johnson moved the terms of discussion forward. After the 1965 violence in Selma, he said on national TV that, without demonstrations, there could have been no progress on civil rights, and he embraced the slogan of the movement, "We shall overcome." Carter has moved race relations beyond "civil rights." He says that racial brotherhood is not simply a matter of improving economic statistics, of assuring civil peace, of parceling out a piece of the political action to a newly organized interest group, or even of putting new verbiage in the pages of the United States Code. The key, he says, is

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how we live and feel.

Carter is not embarrassed to say these profound, simple things, and to show that they are part of his own everyday life, and a necessary derivation from religious principles by which he, and many Americans til now dismissed as bigots, set great store.

In an influential column, David Broder put down Carter's appeals for racial amity, on the grounds that the candidate told a white audience in Wisconsin that he opposed forced busing, while omitting reference to that question from his (otherwise similar) address to a black audience. We doubt that such an omission would attract critical attention if it were made by Henry Jackson, Morris Udall, Hubert Humphrey, or any other Northern candidate. But putting aside his selectivity, Broder's complaint is beside the point. The overriding fact is not what is left out of a particular Carter speech to a single black or white audience. It is the *attitude* he communicates to both blacks and whites. He regards blacks not merely as "equals," but as people.

This, as Leonard Woodcock observed in endorsing him for President, is the most potent instrument yet produced by our politics to achieve "an end to the Civil War and bring this country together into one nation." The late Alexander Bickel once observed, about civil rights enforcement, that "the establishment of law" could have no social meaning unless followed by a political process "to generate consent to the [new] rule in principle." The possibility of a Carter Presidency presents a unique, totally unexpected chance to generate nationwide consent for the equalitarian principle.

In hard political terms, what all this means is that Carter's candidacy has significantly expanded the potential constituency for progressive policies. But if this is true, why do many liberals reject Carter? The reason most frequently given—and it has wide public currency—is that Carter is fuzzy—or "conservative" on the issues. Yet his campaign statements are clear enough and quite comprehensive. As James Reston recently observed, he has "answered more questions, and been more specific than Ford, Reagan, or most of his Democratic opponents." Interestingly, the fallacy of the "anti-Washington" tag pinned on him by the press has mainly been revealed in coverage of his campaign by relatively conservative publications—*The Wall Street Journal, Business Week* and *US News & World Report*. A *Business Week* interviewer said to Carter: "You're talking about more efficient government, not necessarily smaller government?" Carter replied, "That's right." His plan to rationalize the bureaucracy—clearly the centerpiece of the regime he hopes to establish—does not include "cutting spending on social programs"—as he told an interviewer from *US News*. As he told the same interviewer, the plan *does* include "better general economic planning to get rid of the roller-coaster dips and curves we have faced in the last eight years," through expanding the Council of Economic Advisors.

Carter opposes federal revenue-sharing with the states because "The money was simply stolen from the poor and afflicted people of this nation, who have been served through categorical grant programs . . ." In a similar vein, his health care statements criticize Ford's cynical device of shifting federal expenses to the states and "to the poorest of our citizens in the form of increased deductibles, co-insurance, and consequently reduced benefits." On welfare, Carter acknowledges—*in a television commerical*—that 90 percent of recipients are unemployable and should be given a "uniform, nationwide payment to meet the basic necessities of life."

That's what he says. Would he do it? The best evidence is his impressive record as governor. Steven Brill, in his widely publicized critique of Carter in the March *Harper's*, admitted:

> *Carter was a good governor . . . He fought for tough consumer laws and banking regulation, and opened the government to blacks and women. He developed new programs in health care, education, and corrections, although Georgia's prisons are still terribly overcrowded and lacking in medical and psychiatric care. He constantly traveled the state listening to citizen complaints.*

The League of Conservation Voters recently cited Carter for "an outstanding performace" on environmental issues "consistently ahead of his state legislature."

Carter's Georgia regime appears to have been dominated by two goals—a manager's interest in administrative rationality and efficiency, reflected in his 1972 Reorganization Act, and a reformer's conception of government as "the only effective representative and voice for the unorganized citizen," reflected in the numerous new programs Carter initiated. It is logical to presume that these goals would dominate a Carter Presidency.

Could he succeed? It is argued that his lack of Washington experience and ties would impair his effectiveness as President. There may be truth in this. But more important, we feel, given his goals, is Carter's experience in Georgia as a *consumer* of the federal government's services. His autobiography emphasizes the difficulties state officials face in attempting to make sense of the federal administrative morass, as they implement federally funded programs. If Morris Udall and Hubert Humphrey were not blinded by their parochial Washington perspective, and by their paternal feelings for the bureaucracy, they would see that reorganization is not primarily a "conservative" issue; it is the states and cities and citizens who use the programs that most urgently require rationalization of the federal establishment.

And no person is likely soon to be elected President who is as unfettered and free to effect institutional reform as Jimmy Carter is this year.

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Why does one continually hear Carter described as a question-mark? Why have his opponents become so successful in convincing voters and columnists that there is nothing behind the Carter smile? One reason, of course, is that the media have almost totally ignored Carter's gubernatorial record, as well as his campaign issue statements. The coverage of Carter has focused on what is novel and provocative about his candidacy—his fundamentalism, its gut appeal to both white and black evangelical Protestants, his phenomenal political rise. None of these themes is calculated to impress Northern liberal Democrats with Carter's credentials to fill the shoes of the great liberal Democratic Presidents.

On the contrary, as Charles Morgan, Richard Reeves, and others have pointed out, someone from Carter's background faces deeply resilient, if often unconscious, prejudice among important Northern Democratic constituencies. In our view, only the existence of such preconceptions can explain why so many Northern liberals impose on Carter standards of clarity and specificity with which they would never think of encumbering other candidates. When people say they have no idea what Jimmy Carter stands for, often they really mean that he is unfamiliar, even bizarre. They choose Jerry Brown over Jimmy Carter, not, of course, because Brown is "specific" on the issues, or because they know and approve Brown's stands, but because he lacks Carter's cultural strangeness.

This cultural gap also helps explain a charge related to the non-specificity allegation—*i.e.*, that Carter may be a sinister figure, a Democratic Nixon. The charge is difficult to disprove, since it is not based on asserted facts but only on ineffable, unnameable suspicions. By his own account, Carter "twisted a lot of arms" to achieve his legislative objectives in Georgia. But there are no allegations that his methods went beyond standard horsetrading techniques. There were no abuses, no scandals. It does not seem plausible to brand as "Nixon-like" a man whose policies so pervasively reflect compassion for the weak. One would search *Six Crises* in vain for sentiments such as this from Carter's autobiography:

> *Those who make decisions in our government are most often relatively isolated from the citizens most affected by the decisions . . . How many members of a state legislature or of Congress feel within their own family membership any direct effects of the welfare system, job training programs, prison reform efforts, drug or alcohol rehabilitation centers, unemployment compensation programs, or the public mental and physical health institution. Very few indeed. They can even afford to avoid the public school system if they choose . . .*

Those unghosted words do not reflect the type of vengeful, repressive mentality that brought us Watergate.

Carter's record suggests that the atmosphere in his White House would not be relaxed, after the manner of the current administration. But as recently stated by David Nordan of the *Atlanta Journal:*

> *His administration would be goal oriented, rather than power oriented, with an emphasis on humanitarian results. Carter is completely uninterested in power for the sake of power. He is very much interested in power as a tool for getting what he wants done.*

One cannot have meaningful reform in Washington without a strong President.

Perhaps the greatest irony is that Carter has been tagged with the "fuzziness" charge because he dislikes mouthing endorsements of laundry lists of bills, programs, and other forms of "specific proposals" thrust in front of him by his speechwriters and researchers. Carter has suffered the wrath of reporters and, more damaging, of his ex-speechwriter Bob Shrum, by generally restricting commitments to major issues with which he is himself personally versed. One of Shrum's most bitter complaints was Carter dropped one of several legislative endorsements from a speech draft written by Shrum on coal mine health and safety. The speech was handed to Carter less than an hour before he was to descend into a mine in Mathias, Pennsylvania. One of us was at the mine site that day, and can attest that Carter declined to endorse the proposal because his questions about it could not then be satisfactorily answered.

We regard as a virtue Carter's inclination to master personally the principles of his program. The electorate appears likely to share this view. As Sen. McGovern learned in the campaign of 1972, the public is no longer impressed by shiny "proposals" the consequences of which are poorly understood by the candidate. Popular skepticism about candidates promising endless new entries in the *Federal Register* will, we believe, be decisive in November. The next President, whoever he is, will be someone perceived as committed to restraining and ordering regulatory sprawl. The victor will either be one who, like Reagan or Ford, abjures the humanitarian goals of liberal social programs or who, like Jimmy Carter, wants to see those goals efficiently met.

In his autobiography, Carter notes that one of his ancestors was an active supporter of Tom Watson, the turn-of-the-century populist who, as racism engulfed the South, forsook his liberalism and became known as an anti-black demagogue. Ever since, Northern liberals have intermittently hoped that the populist dream of a biracial equalitarian politics might rise again in the South. But there had been little optimism that it would ever happen. Jimmy Carter has revived that old populist dream. It would be tragic if Northern liberal opposition, based on differences of regional style rather than purpose, aborted this exciting enterprise.

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The Three Strands of Jimmy Carter's Religion

by E. Brooks Holifield

In 1970—running for governor of Georgia—Jimmy Carter felt compelled to say he wasn't an atheist; in 1976—running for President—he must explain that he is not a red-neck Baptist with a hot line to God. He is a Southern Baptist who won the respect of Orthodox Jews in Atlanta and risked the wrath of small-town teetotalers. In one speech he talks of love and decency, in another of the morally ambiguous uses of political power. But Carter is not a religious chameleon.

Contrasts emerge naturally from a faith that is a mixture of three distinct historical traditions, each of which has created political problems for him. As a religious man Carter embodies a form of Southern evangelicalism with roots in the Puritan era, an 18th-century variety of religious pluralism, and a sophisticated "Christian Realism." The compound may at first seem incongruous and it is the source of confusion among those now trying to understand the Carter phenomenon. His capacity to hold these strands in harmony may determine not only his appeal as a candidate but also his performance as President, if he achieves his goal.

The Southern Baptist Convention is among the last great repositories of the Puritan tradition in America. New England Puritans required of one another a set of inward religious experiences; admission to their churches depended on a credible narration of "conversion," which they defined as "regeneration" or "rebirth." During the Great Awakening of religious fervor in the early 18th century, many regenerate folk within Congregationalist churches decided that they could no longer abide their more stolid and flat-footed companions. Hence they formed separatist congregations to cultivate inward piety, and in the process some of them decided that such external forms as infant baptism subverted the purity of the church. In 1755 a large group of these "Separate Baptists" migrated to Guilford County, North Carolina—and the South has never been the same. They quickly joined in the Southern phase of the awakening, soon outnumbered or infiltrated smaller Baptist groups, and thus permanently stamped the piety of southern Baptists with a clear Puritan imprint.

For these revivalistic Baptists—and for Carter—the conversion experience was neither a new revelation from God (which would diminish Biblical authority) nor a mystical absorption into the divine, but rather an experience of forgiveness, an undeserved gift, deeply felt and described in highly personal terms as a "relationship with Christ." Their "rebirth" also entailed responsibilities; it initiated a process of personal growth designed to impose control over such passions as anger, lust, pride and fear, and to elicit the more positive virtues of love and compassion. In other words, John Calvin has lightly laid his hand upon Jimmy Carter. Whatever he may think about traditional Calvinist doctrines (and I suspect that he is indifferent to the doctrinal minutiae), Carter embodies a Calvinist piety filtered through Puritan introspection and revivalist exhortation.

An orthodox Lutheran would speak of the Christian life as a state of being a thoroughgoing sinner *and* a forgiven saint. A traditional Catholic would think of Christian existence as a process of growth nurtured by the visible Church with its tangible and omnipresent sacraments. Carter speaks of an experience of forgiveness that issues in strenuous discipline, inner commitment and introspective watchfulness. His "rebirth" in 1967 followed the time-honored pattern: a sense of unworthiness, a moment of resignation, an experience of release, and then, as he phrased it for an appreciative United Methodist Conference in Atlanta in 1972, the continuing "search in my own heart for a corrective attitude toward my natural inclinations."

Carter's ethics are interwoven with an understanding of Christian "growth" as defined by the Calvinist tradition: the struggle to overcome the self and to love other people as a demonstration of love for Christ. (The Puritans spoke of it as a process of "mortification" and "vivification.") His self-criticism in religious gatherings during the past decade parallels some of the charges now being directed against him: "I tend," he said, "to exalt myself," to want to be "tough," "aggressive" and "hard." He often quotes a phrase that he learned from a Cuban minister, Eloy Cruz, whom he accompanied on an evangelical mission to New England Puerto Ricans in 1967: "Our Savior has hands which are gentle, and he cannot do much with a man who is hard." One of Carter's close friends remarked with a smile that his religious faith "gives him a modicum of humility," and Carter himself now claims that his drive and ambition have been channeled into the effort simply "to do the best I can." I have one life to live, he says, and "I feel . . .

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that God wants me to do the best I can with it." As a consequence Carter has been a Christian social activist. Indeed he has said that politics is for him a form of ministry, and he once described his state senate district in Georgia as "a church with 80,000 members."

One of his former ministers, arguing that Carter was not really interested in theological issues, claimed that religion for him was basically a matter of inward piety and "loving your neighbor." In a 1973 address, Carter used "religion" and "ethics" as synonymous terms in speaking of persons who were "deeply religious" in their "treatment of unfortunate people or afflicted people or black people or poor people." There seems little doubt that his subtle courting of the Wallace voters helped him win his 1970 campaign for governor, but once in office Carter devoted himself to racial justice, prison reform, and the expansion of medical, legal and educational opportunities to the powerless. His sermons to professional associations usually excoriated their collective selfishness and called for expansion of their services. He rarely used the word "God" in his official speeches, but, when he did, the term functioned generally in two ways: the poor should have the right and means to develop their "God-given talents," and the powerful have the responsibility to share their "God-given blessings" for the common welfare. Carter persuaded his own fashionable Northside Drive Baptist Church to set up medical clinics in Atlanta ghettos.

Both his social commitments and his empiricism distinguish Carter's religious faith from classical fundamentalism. He is not a fundamentalist. He once jokingly referred to Paul Tillich as "a great theologian who is a little too liberal for a Baptist fundamentalist like me." But then he drew from Tillich the conclusion that "when we quit searching and think we know the answers . . . perhaps at that moment we lose part of our religion"—a remark hardly congruent with fundamentalist certainties.

The original fundamentalist movement was a protest against theological liberalism, Darwinism and Biblical criticism. It was preoccupied with the codification of such "essential" doctrines as the verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, his "substitutionary atonement" and, often, an esoteric doctrine called "premillenial dispensationalism," which asserted that no corporate human progress was possible until Christ's imminent return to earth. The fundamentalists were strong in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1920s, but within two decades their excesses sparked a backlash among religious conservatives who were preoccupied with interior piety rather than doctrinal purity. The formation in 1942 of the National Association of Evangelicals symbolized the emerging strength of this brand of conservative Protestant pietism, much to the dismay of fundamentalist leaders.

COMING: John Osborne

on the road

with Ford and Reagan

in California

Like other evangelicals, Carter may at times agree with fundamentalists about specific doctrines, but he has openly expressed his inability to go along with St. Paul's subordination of women, thereby questioning the infallibility of Scripture. A lay theologian with whom he has discussed religion over the years says flatly that "Carter does not take the Bible literally" at every point. And one of his ministers in Atlanta suggested that Carter simply would not be interested in "quibbling with people over theological issues."

Carter does quibble, however, over church-state issues; as a public official he guarded the line of separation. The American legal tradition that governs such matters is the product of an 18th-century alliance of opposites: the deistic Jeffersonians who feared the tyranny of the church, and religious sectarians who believed that government would corrupt the church. Partly because they were the outsiders, southern Baptists were foes of religious establishments. The pious John Leland worked hand in hand with Jefferson to secure religious freedom in Virginia. Every southern Baptist youngster learns in Sunday School the exploits of Roger Williams, who stands as close to sainthood as any Baptist ever gets.

Because of their dominant position in rural Southern culture, many Baptists impose their mores on the region's legal structure without fully realizing what they are doing. But Carter tried to maintain the separation. As a state senator in 1964 he proposed an amendment to remove from the state constitution the existing paragraph on religious freedom, which specified that every man had "the natural and inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience." It its place he proposed a sentence stating simply that "no law shall be passed respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," a phrase taken directly from the Bill of Rights. The Senate passed the Carter amendment 28 to 1, but the House refused to go along and the senators then backed down. Carter accused them of "requiring that God be worshiped"—a stand that later cost him votes. In 1970 the state's progressive former governor, Carl Sanders, angered by Carter's harsh attacks in their contest for the governorship, charged that he was "an ultra-liberal who had once worked to delete the word 'God' from the Georgia

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Constitution." Carter complained that he was being accused of atheism, the "debate" melted away, and Carter won the election.

Once in office he immediately eliminated the ostentatious Sunday services that Lester Maddox had inaugurated in the governor's mansion; he pushed through legislation giving full citizenship to 18-year-olds, including the right to buy liquor, a traditional Baptist taboo; and he scrupulously distinguished between his churchmanship and his political office, often to the extent of reminding visiting groups from his local church that he had invited them to the mansion as personal, not official, guests. Consequently the Jewish leaders in Atlanta have not shared the feeling of trepidation about Carter's religion that has emerged in some of the Midwestern and Northern cities. We have "no problem about that," said Rabbi Emmanuel Feldman of Congregation Beth-Jacob after a meeting with 10 prominent Jewish figures. "Indeed, it might be nice to have some spiritual depth in the White House."

The third strand of Carter's religious heritage has surfaced in a recent issue of *The Wall Street Journal*. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. suggested that Carter was theologically fuzzy in admiring both Tolstoi and Reinhold Niebuhr. While Schlesinger's observation seems more a polemical ploy than a considered historical judgment, it does call attention to another tradition in Carter's background: the "Christian Realism" that emerged in Protestant circles in the '30s.

Carter stands in a long line of politicians who began to appreciate Niebuhr after becoming involved in the complexities of power; his evangelical tradition did not provide a language for dealing with such realities. Carter's acquaintance with Niebuhr dates back at least to the early '60s, when he and William Gunter, now an associate justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, began having periodic informal discussions about theology. Gunter gave Carter a copy of *Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics*, a compilation of lengthy excerpts that became, in Gunter's words, "a political Bible" for Carter. After reading Niebuhr the two men agreed that "love and kindness meant a great deal in one-to-one relationships but not in dealings with structures and corporate groups."

Carter has often quoted Niebuhr's maxim that "the sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world." For Niebuhr the comment reflected a disillusionment both with Christian liberals who sought to realize the Kingdom of God on earth through moralism and love, and with secular humanists whose hopes for the future rested on their optimism about human nature. He argued that the human capacity for transcending self invariably produced anxiety and thus spawned a futile effort in all of us to secure our existence by making absolutes of merely relative and finite values. He claimed, further, that corporate groups—especially nations and social classes—lacked the capacity to sacrifice their own interests for a common good. And he concluded that a realistic goal for Christians was not the establishment of a loving society but rather a relatively just order maintained through a balance of forces.

Carter's most intriguing public discussion of Niebuhr took place at the now celebrated Law Day address at the University of Georgia in May, 1974. Speaking from rough notes, Carter talked about law and justice; he told his audience that "the laws are constantly changing to stabilize the social equilibrium of forces and counterforces in a dynamic society, and that the law in its totality is an expression of the structure of government." Then he blasted away at the inequities of the legal system: "In general, the powerful and the influential in our society shape the laws and have a great influence on the legislatures and the Congress." The fallibility of man and the contentions of society always prevent us from "achieving perfection," he said, but then added that Martin Luther King, Jr. symbolized the continuing effort to achieve justice in an imperfect society. Carter was repeating familiar themes. His friends claim that he has read a lot of Niebuhr. One of his former ministers believes that he has "far more than a layman's understanding of Niebuhr's thought"; another disagrees. In any case, his admiration for Tolstoi does not conflict with his Niebuhrian vision. Carter was not taken with Tolstoi's pacifism or his religious ethics. He was impressed, rather, with Tolstoi's insistence in *War and Peace* that the course of history is determined not by powerful, competent and ruthless leaders (not even by generals) but by the inclinations, passions, willpower, courage, prejudices and inarticulate aspirations of the masses. Niebuhr would not have been uncomfortable with that notion.

Garry Wills has noted the "narrowness of mastery" in Carter's religious confidence, observing that he knows, for instance, very little about modern Biblical criticism. Carter has never claimed to be a theologian; he has read Niebuhr, a little Tillich, a bit from Søren Kierkegaard, and some of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings, which he occasionally used in devotional at his Northside Church. Indeed the three historical traditions in his thought lie side by side, sometimes intersecting but occasionally colliding. Yet the collision is oddly reassuring. Carter's roots in the Bible Belt, he says, have given him "a kind of unchanging confidence in the future." But one would also like to think that his Niebuhrian sense of limits might check the pretension that often lurks within Protestant fervor; that his evangelical optimism might restrain the cynical misreading of Niebuhr so characteristic of the political "realists" who justified our Vietnam policies with Niebuhrian homilies; and that his commitments on church-state issues might enhance his appreciation for the pluralism of American society. Such an internal system of checks and balances could turn out to be a presidential virtue.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

The Missouri Breaks

(United Artists)

I thought of Abner Biberman. He was a New York actor who went to Hollywood and was in numerous films in the 1940s. Once, in a Western, I saw this former Group Theater actor playing a Chinese who spoke with a Scottish accent in Arizona. In *The Missouri Breaks* Marlon Brando plays a character similarly pasted together of the extremes of possibility—never mind credibility—in an attempt to give some eccentricity to a conventional form.

According to the advance stories on this picture, which were more interesting than the picture itself, the author of the screenplay, Thomas McGuane, can't be held entirely responsible for dialogue or narrative. Apparently Brando cut up more ructions during the shooting than on any film of his since *Mutiny on the Bounty* and demanded alterations in his role. So it's hard to say who's responsible for the character he plays: a gun-for-hire who wears buckskins but no hat, just a headband; who makes his first entrance on horseback leaning out of sight on the other side of his horse, like a Cossack; who speaks in an Irish brogue; who drops the brogue with certain people and speaks "American"; who carries binoculars and a rifle that can kill at 500 yards; whose first scene (at a funeral) is as patly contrived as the worst of Pinero and even ends with a flashy exit; who dresses at one point, inexplicably, as a woman; who calmly and sweetly kills men by drowning, knifing in the eye, burning, and of course, shooting; who, toward the end, tries to kiss his horse and "seduces" him by holding a carrot in his mouth while the horse nibbles toward him.

But even though it's hard to know how much of this panting picturesqueness is Brando's doing, it's not anomalous in a script that ruptures itself trying to be offbeat. McGuane has a reputation as a novelist that, in my view, exceeds his ability to make pastiches of Hemingway and Faulkner. I saw another Western that he wrote, *Rancho De Luxe*, which had much of the latter-day pretentiousness and patronization of this one. Like James Toback of *The Gambler* he is a littérateur who has come to films to show those movie boobs how to "class up" things. All he lacks is the ability; all he does is make us long for some competent old screenwriting craftsman.

The Missouri Breaks, which is the name of the headwaters of the Missouri River in Montana where the action takes place, is windy fuddle. McGuane takes a familiar yarn: a rich rancher with a nubile daughter, some rustlers, a lawman imported to wipe out the rustlers. He then changes the stock moral colorations of these characters: Pa is made grasping and vindictive and is given literary appetite (3500 volumes in his ranchhouse library); the daughter is frankly horny and goes over to the rustlers' ranch to bed their chief; the chief, Jack Nicholson, is not a romantic desperado, he's not anything much except a thief, although at the end some domestic yearnings are laid on him; the lawman, Brando, is insane. In its original form, this conventional plot was based on simplistic, clear moral standards. McGuane arbitrarily turned the convention upside down but without turning the moral standards upside down. If he had done the reversal completely, his script might either have been blackly comic or diabolist. But he has simply eliminated any moral view and this is crippling to a genre that had part of its origin in moralism (not morality). At the end the script makes a desperate lunge to tuck up its untidiness: Nicholson and the girl part, hoping in some ambiguous way to meet again and be together—this in spite of the fact that he has killed her father, among other men, and is now a known horsethief. You feel that if anyone even *breathed* during this precarious "happy" ending, it would dissolve right up there on the screen.

The only hint of moral tegument in the script is the comradeship among the rustlers. But it's not the dynamic center of the film, as it was in Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*, which was built on almost a Genet-like reversal of values, counterpointed by sentiment about exploited peasants. *The Missouri Breaks* has no center, not even in evil: it's just a jumble of motives and effects.

Among those effects are a comic train robbery in the vein of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and some wooing scenes between Nicholson and the girl (very delibly played by Kathleen Lloyd) that are meant to reverse rustic romance but that simply intrude 1976 into 1876. Also there is an excremental subtheme running through the film—people coming out of outhouses, etc.—that is meant to pay off when one of the rustlers is later blasted while sitting on the seat. Are you able to cope with all this candor?

McGuane's dialogue is schismatic. He makes something of a try at the authentic, but he keeps letting his literary *bona fides* leak in: phrases like "You're astonished at my arrogance," adjectives like "legendary." And again as Toback did, he laces his script with high-toned references (using the rancher's library as his excuse, I guess): *Tristram Shandy*, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Jefferson.

All this middle-class uppishness fits right into the worst aspects of Arthur Penn, the director. Mixed with his real and rare talents (especially—in the past—for directing actors) Penn has always had a tendency toward cinematic hot air, as in *Mickey One* and especially in his Westerns *The Left-handed Gun* and *The Chase*. He seems to come to Westerns via Joseph Campbell rather than John Ford. He demonstrates this, among other ways, by the blatantly mythopoeic lighting and angles he asks here of his cinematographer Michael Butler. So much of the film is shot in slanting light, early morning or late afternoon, that you begin to wonder whether they ever had noonday in old

Films Worth Seeing

All the President's Men. Admirable try with tough material for film. Anyway, we bring much of the excitement *with* us.

Face to Face. Liv Ullmann at her best, though not Ingmar Bergman at his, in this exploration of "normality."

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest. Specious mental-hospital allegory, but Jack Nicholson is immense.

The Story of Adèle H. Truffaut and another of his crazy ladies. Fine romantic sweep, much distortion of alleged biography.

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Montana. But Penn wants gold, lots of gold, with long slanting shadows behind his figures. When the outlaws gather in their shack, he puts Nicholson—oh, so carelessly—under a crack in the roof that just happens to let in a beam of light to touch one side of his face, dramatizing and romanticizing him.

But what Penn has not mastered in outdoor pictures, as he showed in the much superior *Little Big Man*, is the basic need to keep the action clear. In one long segment of *The Missouri Breaks* the action moves back and forth between Nicholson on his home ground and some of his pals on a rustling expedition to Canada. Each switch back and forth is momentarily confusing because Penn doesn't even use such simple tricks as readily identifiable clothes or horses or currents of action to tell us immediately that we have left the locale of the previous shot. All he really achieves in the matter of action are two of the ugliest killings since *The Godfather*.

Only two members of the cast come off with any credit. Nicholson, bearded, manages at least to flex his fairly featureless role to his persona. Harry Dean Stanton, as his main rustler pal, really has the look of old photographs and conveys some of the struggle of his hard criminal life. Brando, in his foolishly pied role, cannot help scoring some points; but by showing yet again that he has a talent so large that it cannot be completely smothered, he only makes us more impatient with the fact that he's making an ass of himself.

The music is by John Williams who did the ham-handed score for *Jaws* and whose touch has not lightened. The production was headed by a current *wunderkind* named Elliott Kastner who has produced "34 major films in less than a decade," the last of them being the last Charles Bronson picture, and by Robert M. Sherman who produced the ignominous *Scarecrow* and Penn's last film, the disastrous *Night Moves*. Here they have brought forth not a film but a "package"—a big bundle of expensive "credits" and absolutely nothing else.

If Brando hates acting, why doesn't he quit? If McGuane is going to set the film-writing profession to rights, why doesn't he learn how? If Penn's culture-vulture flabbiness is going to keep creeping, why doesn't he try some spiritual rigor? At any rate they all ought to leave Nicholson alone. Million-dollar-a-picture star though he is, he still keeps trying for legitimacy, which is more than I can say of most others in this abortion.

Shakespeare in Washington

It is momentarily intriguing to think that, had he wanted to, Shakespeare could have visited the New World. Certainly he read about it (the Virginia colonies; the "still-vexed Bermoothes") with interest sufficient to prompt recent critics to see in *The Tempest* an early analysis of colonial attitudes. And then there is the nicely coincidental Harvard connection. John Harvard, early benefactor of the college named for him, was descended from a Stratford family with connections to Shakespeare's own. But there was no Shakespeare in the library he willed the college in 1638. Early New England was necessarily an infertile ground for Shakespeare, as Charles H. Shattuck shows in his *Shakespeare on the American Stage*. The Puritan attacks on the English stage carried over to the colonies and pretty well restricted the playing of Shakespeare and other playwrights to the friendlier confines of Williamsburg (where young George Washington was an avid spectator) and points south. Perhaps the only 17th-century New Englander who could have appreciated *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Twelfth Night* was that Stephano/Sir Toby of Merry Mount, Thomas Morton. But Morton was outmanned and outgunned by the redoubtable Standish, and his absurd fate, which has provided later New England writers Nathaniel Hawthorne and Robert Lowell with food for allegory, could also be seen as an allegory of the American rejection of significant aspects of English culture, including the Shakespearean milieu.

Nevertheless, Shakespeare did penetrate America, as he seems to have penetrated the world. It was to celebrate and ponder this phenomenon that the International Shakespeare Association Congress, gracefully and efficiently hosted by the SAA and the Folger Shakespeare Library, convened at the Statler Hilton in Washington, DC the week of April 19-25.

The Congress (entitled *Shakespeare in America*) was, of course, a Bicentennial event. This meant a fair deal of superfluous ceremony, self-congratulatory rhetoric, Anglo-American backslapping, and a commemorative medal that has on one side a fine Shakespeare and on the other a cigar store patriot so enraptured by his flag that he seems not to notice the abyss that gapes at his feet. But the Bicentennial dimension had advantages; it certainly helped draw a varied repertory of speakers from outside the realm of Shakespeare professionals. These were admittedly uneven; Alistair Cooke had interesting and amusing things to say about Shakespeare in early American popular culture, but when he gazed finally into the essence of the man he found only—himself. Anthony Burgess began incomprehensibly, middled tediously, but ended with a compelling comic fable about Shakespeare's late middle age. And, of course, there was Borges. One had seen him earlier in the week—blind, ethereal, dignified, being managed tenderly by a much larger, much stronger man: Oedipus at the coffee shop. His talk was the most ostentatiously public event of the Congress. An overflow crowd buzzed excitedly in the glare of the TV lights, and after a tantalizing delay Señor Borges

NEWSWORTHY

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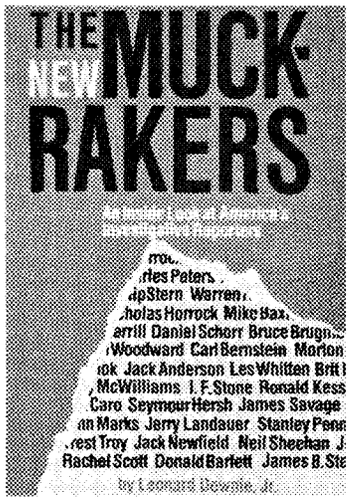

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entered to deliver—in a voice as feathery as angel wings—an elaborate web of speculation on "The Riddle of Shakespeare," revealing at the end a primal likeness between God as creator and Shakespeare as creator, and the inexhaustible but impossible effort to give both a local habitation, a name, a real and palpable presence.

Such momentous events capped the delegates' working days, mornings having been spent in the traditional arenas of the scholarly congress—panel, paper session, seminar. The real work was done here, but as the benefits were personal to each delegate I will only note that the whole panopoly of Shakespearean investigation was on display and that the senior people tended toward general topics to which their broad liberal humanist principles could be fruitfully applied, whereas the young ones were deep in the texts, rethinking everything and organizing their insights around such terms as *myth, rhetoric, structure, psychology, performance*. It was a situation alive with generational ironies: a 30ish American informed the distinguished L.C. Knights that he had quoted him several times in a book: "To cut me up!" crowed Knights, looking unaccountably pleased.

Given the year and the city, political concerns were inevitable. Shakespeare was, after all, the man who gave us that packaged politician, Richard . . . of Gloucester ("Look you, get a prayer book in your hand/And stand betwixt two churchmen"). Joel Hurstfield mentioned Watergate specifically, and no one missed the connection between that final, belated trauma of the late '60s, the quietistic mood of the '70s, and his presentation of Shakespeare's political milieu as one fatigued by popular and millenarian rebellion, finding welcome refuge in simple tolerance and small adjustments. The "Remarks on Shakespeare" by Elliot Richardson "a St. Albans parent" at Washington Cathedral did not stray from this tone. Richardson fumbled for a second with Canon Martin's seeming attempt to convert Shakespeare into the track coach of Avon, but gave his audience a modest amateur's excursion through his personal encounters with the plays. The few shy references to the Saturday Night Massacre were couched in the "low-key British style humor" already noted in this magazine, and the whole event—magisterial setting included—was a suave Eastern establishment performance (I reject out of hand a cynic's notion that there is a Shakespeare Affairs staffer at Commerce).

But there were other, very different voices: the finely honed dialectic of Robert Weimann, whose lively "Marxist Approaches to Shakespeare" seminar sustained a vigorous theoretical argument well outside the limits of time and place allotted to it; Eldred Jones, who told graphically of the energizing but deadly serious effects of producing Shakespeare in the explosive world of contemporary African politics; Stephen J. Brown, whose paper "The Uses of Shakespeare in America: A Study in Class Domination" was an intricate, ironic, scrupulously documented meditation on the education theory promulgated by the Anglo-American cultural leadership in the early 20th-century. Brown's final call was for the loving, tactile, Whitmanian Shakespeare that lies behind the spokesman for English gentility our forefathers saw and promoted. His call had at least one response before it was issued: Joseph Papp (hearing the immigrant beat of lower Brooklyn) did his iconoclastic tap dance across British speech and "traditional" Shakespeare, ending with his own call for a multiracial, many-accented national theater for Shakespeare and other classics.

Charles Shattuck's welcome *Shakespeare on the American Stage: From the Hallams to Edwin Booth* (published in conjunction with Congress by the Folger Shakespeare Library) shows that the American response to theater has always been turbulent. David Douglass and his company were forced in 1761 to present *Othello* not as a play but as a series of "Moral Dialogues" with each character neatly tagged. Thus, Othello: "Of jealousy, our being's bane/Mark the small cause, and the most dreadful pain." But a more serious problem was created by the long dominance of British actors in America. A "better sort" of theatergoer was always available to welcome an actor such as Charles Kemble, "the express image of the English gentleman of the past generation." But there were other forces at work, the kind represented by the *Tribune* critic who "pitched into Shakespeare for always telling lies about The Working-Man" and for never showing "one ray of genius or polish except in courtly Hamlets and gallant Petruchios." These extremes clashed with the rise of the fiery nationalist Edwin Forrest, America's first native-born actor of genius. The rivalry that developed between Forrest and British

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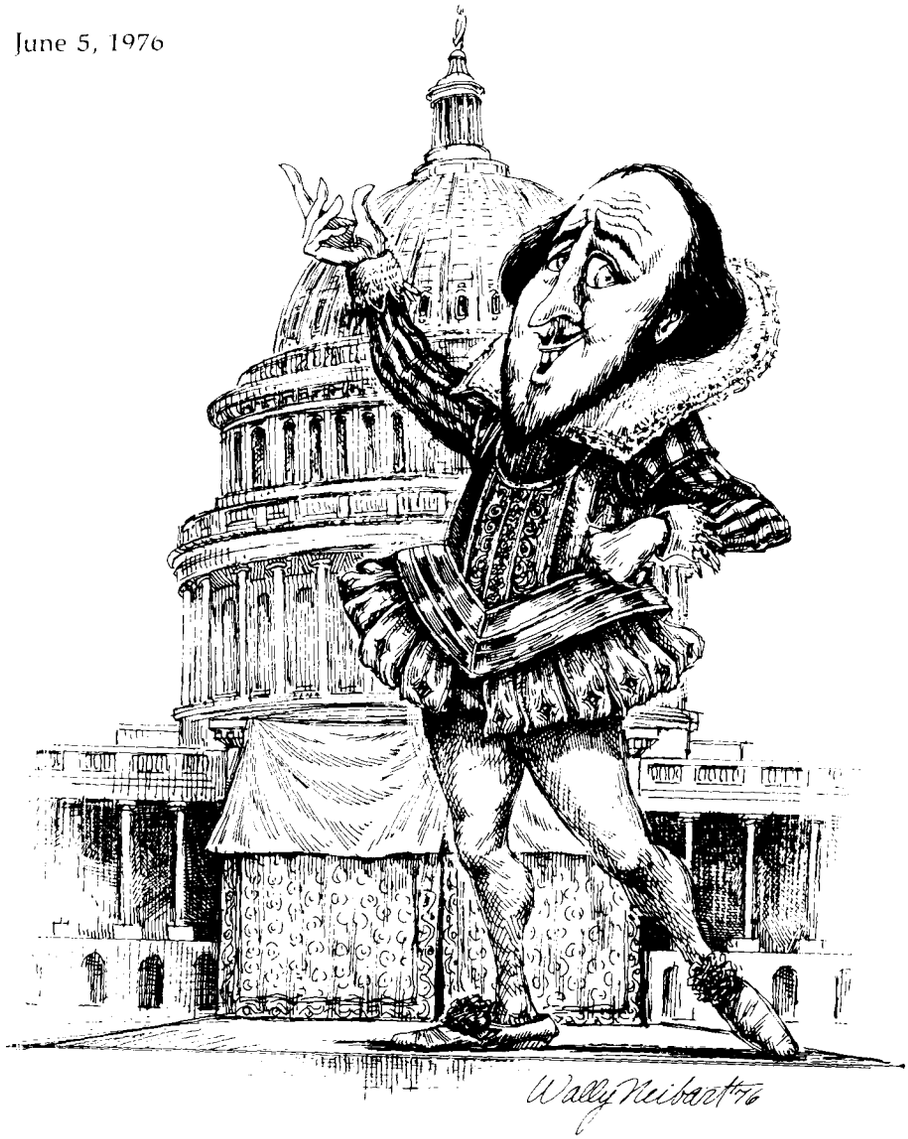

actor Charles Macready provoked jingoistic passions that resulted finally in the astonishing Astor Place Riot, into which the military was called. Thirty-one people were killed in the resulting gunfire. This moment, which Shattuck prepares for carefully, forms the narrative center of the book, and the tensions revealed are still present, in less violent ways, in contemporary debates over radical styles of theatrical production and the social uses of Shakespeare.

But it will not do to force Shattuck into this or any other thesis. He is a deliberately unassuming writer who keeps himself scrupulously concealed behind his lucid, detailed account of the remarkable men and women who took the stage in early America. Indeed, much of the considerable pleasure of this book comes at this elemental level: delight in a Fanny Kemble who played stage parts in America and also penetrated to the heart of American life, anatomizing it brilliantly in letters and journals; or pity and amazement at the "mad tragedian" Junius Brutus Booth, the man who fathered the Booth brothers and who in his derangement rebelled against the fate of his character (Richard III) and duelled the Earl of Richmond off the stage and into the street. Special mention should be made of the illustrations. Beautifully chosen and presented, they provide that crucial element of spectacle necessary to any theatrical experience.

I wish, in ending, to bring back Señor Borges and his riddle of Shakespeare. For a whole week all of us were living demonstrations of the power of that riddle; we were the un-riddlers, defying the injunction that riddles are not to be solved, failing to solve, yet finding exhilaration in the attempt and the continued hope to solve. We may not, as Borges said, know any more about Shakespeare than we do about God, but neither do we know any less. And despite the, perhaps, different scope of the inquiries, the impulse to understand creators and their works remains a sustaining, engaging activity.

Roger Stilling

Roger Stilling is author of the forthcoming *Love and Death in Renaissance Tragedy* (LSU Press).

Books Considered

The Mind-Reader
by Richard Wilbur

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $6.95)

Divine Comedies
by James Merrill

(Atheneum; $8.95)

Richard Wilbur's celebrated panache has carried him to most of our poetry prizes but not, I think, all the way to Parnassus. He is a bell too conscious of its clapper, clapper-happy. Pert but proper, always safe rather than sorry, his poetry is completely without risks, a prize pupil's performance. His ideas are always cut exactly to the size of his poems; he is never puzzled. And the ideas are all sentiments, aware of their potential high-minded emotional value and determined to snuggle into it.

In his new volume (his sixth) Wilbur deplores poets who reject "fictive music" to "confess"—he is one of those who patronize Sylvia Plath, a sure sign of moral complacency. Thinking back to 1953 when he met Plath in the home of Edna Ward, he says of the latter:

And Edna Ward shall die in fifteen years,
After her eight-and-eighty summers of
Such grace and courage as permit no tears,
The thin hand reaching out, the last word love,

Outliving Sylvia who, condemned to live,
Shall study for a decade, as she must,
To state at last her brilliant negative
In poems free and helpless and unjust.

This disposes one to quarrel. Plath may not look noble compared to Edna Ward—after all, few could as she is here aggrandized. But, less helpless than most poets if less free, she wrote with a shattering originality beside which Wilbur's lines appear fusty, and safe as gingersnaps. Wilbur attacks her Achilles' heel while hardly noticing the winged foot.

To "confess" is not required of a poet, even in an age when only the individual accent, the personal substance, per-

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suades. But to make language revelatory—this we may expect. Wilbur's idiom is decades old, at times even centuries old, as when he speaks of human nature as "The rude, forked, and ever savage root"—the words so unsavagely trite, the triplet form such a verbal snore, that human nature can scarcely suppress a yawn.

The long title poem of the new volume is the fictive confession of a mind-reader who has "the burden" of being ceaselessly usurped by "the world." He vibrates "with the mutters, plaints,/And flushings [sic] of the race." Sometimes he cheats "a little." Still, his customers (those dupes: "Grazie, professore") keep him in drink. How he would like to become fuddled enough to escape his "gift"! You know right off that it is all about being a poet—you know and do not care, for Wilbur himself cheats quite a lot. His conception is self-congratulatory and too simple and he himself has been usurped not by the world but by English poetry, whose familiar rhythms and diction—"crenellate shade," "plaints"—he relies on instead of invention.

In a tender poem on his daughter—"My daughter is writing a story"—Wilbur says he had forgotten that writing is "always a matter, my darling,/ Of life or death." Wilbur is not one to renew a cliché and even this poem, so nearly fine, wears a plastic shield of self-consciousness, the sentiments and rhythms correct. If only Wilbur could forget that he is that amazing thing, "The Writer." If only his subjects and feelings would a little outrun his facility, and his language take to its feet, and the real work of the poet get done.

Misunderstanding his gifts, James Merrill has written a long, a very long, poem, "The Book of Ephraim." He is not one disposed to call things deeply into question; nor does he wield a comic whip. He is a thoroughly personal poet with a gift for appreciating his own life, pains and all. The epic size is too coarse and ambitious for him. As it is, he has written a poem neither imposingly public nor poignantly personal. "The Book of Ephraim" is made out of the stuff of conversation among intimates. To read it is at best a desultory pleasure, like treading agreeable water.

"Properties: . . . / A blue-and-white cup from the Five & Ten . . . Heavy cardboard sheet / Over which the letters A to Z / Spread in an arc. . . ." Hence begins a ouija board saga, the memoir of numerous communications made to Merrill and his companion, David Jackson, by a certain Ephraim (b. 8 AD, throttled AD 36 "By the imperial guard for having LOVED . . . . CALIGULA").

A "folie à deux," as Merrill's psychoanalyst declares? A sport of the subconscious? Having felt "the tempest in the cup," Merrill himself suspends disbelief. And after all, if over a period of 20 years Ephraim has not changed a life like Tosca's "Lived for art and love," he has so befriended and diverted it, so often pressed the accelerator of stationary evenings in Athens, Greece or Stonington, Connecticut, that Merrill cannot disown him. The poet knocked and was let enter and who is he to turn from enchantment? It was always his way, in Prospero's words, to "be cheerful/And think of each thing well." Besides, how charming Ephraim must be to Merrill: a wit to delight the elegant Classicist, a marvel to excite the die-hard Romantic, and a high-placed admirer for the modest Narcissist so well met, so agreeably poised, in this poet.

Not that Ephraim says anything that need be taken seriously. He is too winsome, too well-bred to transcend *divertissement*. His "Book" is more gossip than gospel: Merrill's father has been reborn to a greengrocer in Kew, Mozart is "A BLACK ROCK STAR / WHATEVER THAT IS" . . . Perhaps the "other" world has never seemed so higgledy-piggledy, so inconsequent. To be the helpless patrons of drolly reckless human beings—such seems the task and sum of the spirits. "I lose touch with the sublime," Merrill says, but where is his sense of the ridiculous? He has kept it half-buttoned up. One must be careful what one laughs at.

"The Book of Ephraim" has neither thought nor plot, and its casual record is made still more desultory by references to a lost and uncompleted novel that of course means more to Merrill than to us. We shuttle between the aimless and the scant. And occasionally the poet's musings twist and preen themselves into defeating abstraction. Having grown "autumnal, mild," he has taken to elaboration, but what autumn knows is how to pull back.

Merrill's genius for nostalgia and the aftermath—"And after rain / A deep reverberation fills with stars"—shows better in shorter, denser narratives, as here in "Lost in Translation" and "Chimes for Yahya." He is a man with an almost crippling, almost enabling love of his own past, his old loves. He needs the deep place, the small pool, to find how close he is, how far after all, from the ecstasy of being self and other, actor and his own audience, simultaneously.

In "Lost in Translation," "Chimes for Yahya," and the lovely last section of "McKane's Falls," Merrill escapes from the mild and diminished feeling of which he now complains. "McKane's Falls" is tuggingly and profoundly, if obliquely, regressive, a Siren's call: "Come live with me, said the waterfall,"

Stay here, a year or two, a year or ten,
Until you've heard it all,
The inside story deafening but true.

"Chimes for Yahya" and "Lost in Translation," by contrast, regress along the fragrant path of autobiography, where concrete railings breast the splendor of dissolution.

True, in "Chimes for Yahya" the poet returns in new emotion to an old emotion without showing why it means so much to him. His gratitude to Yahya may be measureless, but we miss the objective correlative. Merrill's modesty and tact are almost a vice of privacy. As if invented by Henry James, he has often been self-effacing without quite displacing himself with the objects of his love, objects made autonomous. They live by their refraction in his feeling. Still,

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"Chimes for Yahya" has sufficient detail to give firmness (and finely exotic detail it is). The poem triumphs typically, too, through the Jamesian "quality" of the poet's mind and the related sweet radiance of his words.

This radiance does not show well in brief quotation. It has no flash. Steadily, as in the best poem in the volume, "Lost in Translation," it shines through many words, part warmth of attitude, part grace of motion. Here no line is brilliant, none is dull. The subject of the poem—a memory of putting a puzzle together with his "French Mademoiselle"—is likewise unremarkable, save that, in remarking it, the poet makes it live. The slight materials do not feel slight. Here is a child's loneliness, his capacity for absorption in puzzling representations of life, his romance with those who care for him, with history, with what is known only by hearsay and by wish. Here is the man that child fathered trying to father the child through completeness of memory and the magic of verse. It is nearly done. Perhaps it is done. The child is rephrased by the man and nothing seems lost in translation.

Calvin Bedient

Calvin Bedient alternates teaching at UCLA with manning a lookout in the Angeles Forest in California. He is the author most recently of *Eight Contemporary Poets* (Oxford).

The Freedom of the Poet
by John Berryman

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux; $8.95)

"Hurrah for me: my prose collection is going to be a *beauty.*" John Berryman's letter to Robert Giroux, quoted by the latter in his preface to this volume (not *quite* Berryman's projected one but just about) is absolutely dead right: it is a stunning collection, various, bold, subtle, and composed mostly of things I had never before read. The earliest piece in it, published by his classmate Giroux in the *Columbia Review* when they were both college seniors, is about Yeats' plays and early on has the temerity to assert that "The striking fact about this body of work, then, is its triviality, considered in the tradition of English dramatic literature." As a critic Berryman was always likely to say anything as long as he thought it true, and it is good to have Yeats' plays be not simply venerated by the young critic. Sixteen years later he found himself composing an introduction to Lewis' *The Monk*, and in speaking of how its hero's, Ambrosio's, long and difficult process of damnation is fully embodied in the narrative, Berryman is struck by a thought: ". . . and I confess that such a work as Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* seems to me frivolous by comparison. In romantic art, as in snake venenation, overtreatment is the lesser error; but you have to be treating a man who has been bitten." In Mann's novel, "maybe the main thing is not there. In *The Monk* the main thing is there."

Such a voice is unlikely to be subject to the intimidation of current fashions; and throughout the volume Berryman practices comparison and analysis with great skill and inventiveness, as when he finds, in the words of his title, Shakespeare's freedom (in *Macbeth*) to lie in a freedom of language. Accordingly the critic directs us to the marvelous rightness of minute particulars: the meanings of "done" in "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well/It were done quickly," or the tone of contempt in "holily" ("what thou wouldst highly,/That wouldst thou holily"); as well as to larger matters such as, for example, the "very strange tone" of Act III. Berryman asks why Macbeth doesn't lose our sympathy, and to answer the question quotes some strange lines:

> *'O! full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife;' he says, and 'be thou jocund,' and*
> *'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,*
> *Till thou applaud the dead.'*
> *This combination of the domestic with the terrible is unbelievably sinister and grotesque. But it is also pathetic when we hear it in connection with his fierce suffering and hopeless longing.*

This is no more than Professor Berryman or some other good teacher might say in a good class, or than an alert reader might intuit for himself. But time and again his comments helped me look freshly at Shakespearean freedoms of language; thus he is of specifiable use.

As far as I can detect, Berryman's own critical procedures are analogously free. He admits to having been influenced by Eliot, Pound, Blackmur and Empson, all of course inimitable in their extravagant

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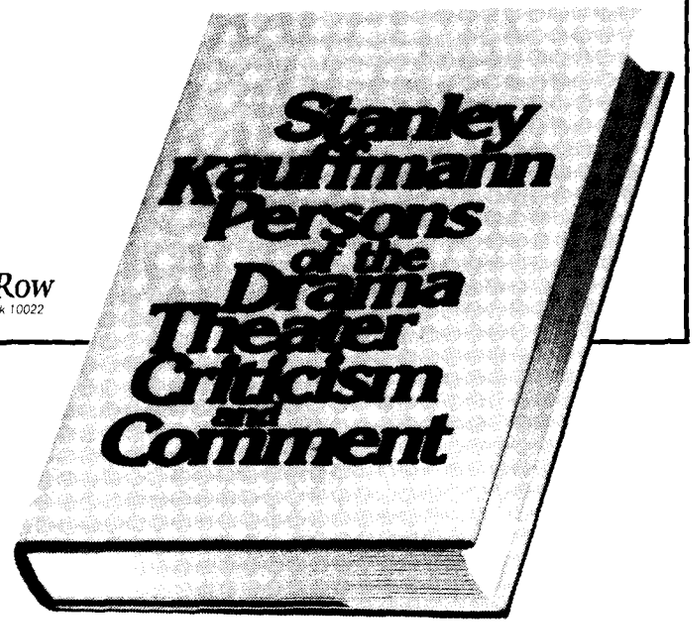

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brilliances, but is slave to nobody—to the extent that no large axes are ground, no ideology of politics or literary doctrine provides a base from which spring the essays. Berryman comes as close as one can (there are disagreements about how close one can come) to being his own man, interested in literature as literature, reading—like Dr. Johnson—solely to be instructed through pleasure. I do not mean to label him as mainly a verbal or "new" critic, though the book's heart probably lies in Section IV with its lengthy and expert performances on Whitman and Pound, plus some late-1940s poetry chronicles which set a standard for that uneasy if necessary form of behavior. But the finest stretch of writing comes in three back-to-back essays on American prose writers: Dreiser, Fitzgerald and Ring Lardner. Grouped under the rubric "Enslavement: Three American Cases," they add up to 30 pages as humanly penetrating and sympathetic as they are critically severe and sound. The essay on Lardner is of particular interest, as Berryman grants him only the freedom of silence—"a refusal to be known or speak out"—and notes how unpromising this "lifelong drive toward *in*expression" was for the production of interesting work. On Lardner's anti-highbrow tendencies he quotes a sentence from the biography under review—"Dryden, who probably had a greater influence on his earlier career than any other writer"—then adds, wryly and significantly, "Of course, this is *Charlie* Dryden, a sportswriter." Exactly enough said.

Robert Lowell's memoir of Berryman has a wonderful story in it about the evening Lowell and Randall Jarrell went down to Princeton to have dinner with Berryman, who had in common with Jarrell (in Lowell's words) their being "slightly heretical disciples of Bernard Haggin." Nothing went right; the sensitive poet-critics insulted each other or sulked; the dinner was not repeated. Lowell says that Jarrell and Berryman both possessed "the same marvelous and maddening characteristics: they were self-centered and unselfish"; this gave a "breathless, commanding rush to their amusements and controversies." Berryman's analogies to things musical, like Mozart's K. 499 quartet or the last songs from *Winterreise* come (and Jarrell's too) as no surprise, considering the carefulness of his listening to poetry and novels. As a reader who is moved only intermittently by *The Dream Songs* and who finds the self-display of many late Berryman poems less than irresistible, I am grateful for these essays which, put along with the admirable posthumous novel *Recovery*, display powers of criticism and creation remarkably pure, even impersonal in their exercise—if Eliot's word still has anything going for it.

One addition to this collection appears without the seal of Berryman's intent to publish it here—a short story found by his wife and placed at the end. About a teacher preparing to teach, then going through "Lycidas" with his class, "Wash Far Away" closes the book of Berryman in a way not soon forgettable, even down to its final sentence: "He felt older than he had in the morning, but he had moved into the exacting conviction that he was . . . something . . . not dead." That is perhaps both commanding and as unselfish as any writer might hope to be.

William H. Pritchard

William H. Pritchard is professor of English at Amherst.

Chronicles of Bustos Domecq by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy-Casares

(Dutton; $7.95)

In Borges' most famous fiction a contemporary writer, Pierre Menard, is called "author of the *Quixote*," a title that he does not entirely deserve, since he wrote only certain segments of Cervantes' masterpiece. But those segments which he did write correspond in every particular, and without the slightest help from Cervantes, to the text of the earlier work. The deadpan narrator of this story makes clear that, superficial identity aside, Menard's work is utterly original, since behind each of his words lay a totally different motivation from that of Cervantes, and even in some ways superior, since to write the idiom of Cervantes in the 20th century, and *without a single* lapse, is many times more difficult than the task facing the original author. This serious story makes a quite serious point about the art of reading, though no one can read it without being at, and sometimes over, the verge of laughter. It is typical of the sort of risk that Borges, an incomparable wit, is willing to take in his best work. Even without the imaginative audacity, the elegant gaiety of his style would be a source of delight, however somber the subject.

In a way, the *Chronicles of Bustos Domecq* represent an even greater risk. It is sheer nonsensical hilarity, for one thing, and like every book that openly invites us to laugh, it occasionally strains rather hard and without success. But more than that, it is also an exercise in one of the rarest and most perilous of literary genres, deliberate self-parody. Unconscious self-parody, God knows, is easy enough to find in great writers from Wordsworth to Wallace Stevens, but the deliberate variety is for obvious reasons seldom undertaken. It requires courage, for one thing, and also an assurance that the butt of all the fun is invulnerable.

Borges and his life-long friend Bioy-Casares parody absolutely everything in the Borgesian *oeuvre*, from the style to the individual subjects of particular stories.

Borges' style does not vary noticeably whether it comes to us as the voice of some ostensible narrator or the actual voice of Borges speaking in one of his countless interviews and public appearances. The manner is courtly yet affable, distant yet obliging, a strange blend of disdain and deference that keeps the reader or interlocutor always slightly off balance. It is of course erudite in the extreme, laden with literary allusion of an appalling breadth and eccentricity, and fussily preoccupied with bibliographic detail. The outward cloak of politeness is the perfect concealment for the honed edge of Borgesian wit that is capable of cutting an opponent's legs off at the knee so deftly that he alone remains unaware of what has befallen him. In the give-and-take of real life the manner is wonderfully lethal; in the mouth of his literary *personae* it is an instrument of exquisite irony; parodied in the works of Bustos Domecq it is vaudeville, sometimes killingly funny, sometimes droll, and sometimes, alas, sophomoric and tiresome. The wonderful fervor of the original is limned here as baseless (or venal) enthusiasm. The rapier of the wit becomes a sledgehammer. The erudite comedy descends to a footnote humor that reminds us, to its disadvantage, of the immortal Frank Sullivan's "Garland of Ibids for Van Wyck Brooks." More

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often than not, however, and this is the point, it is a hilarious send-up of Borges' better style.

As for the parody of Borges' subjects, that comes in the first and one of the funniest pieces, "Homage to César Paladión." The most obvious target within Borges' own work is the story of Pierre Menard mentioned above; but there is a target beyond this, a point to which I shall return.

Menard reproduced, word for word, only portions of the *Quixote*. Paladión, in the expansive tradition of parody, has "granted his name" to, among others, *The Pathfinder, Emile, Egmont, The Eclectic Reader* (second series), *She, The Hound of the Baskervilles, Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Georgics* (in Spanish translation), the *De Divinatione* (in the original Latin. And what Latin! Cicero's!), and at the time of his death had completed the *first draft* (my italics) of *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, "a work of biblical character." Owing to Paladión's never having fallen "into the all too easy vanity of writing a single new line," these works were curiously identical, down to the last comma, with others bearing the same titles. The literary world was baffled by this mystery until a critic named Farrel du Bosc wrote, in 1937, a suspiciously up-to-date monograph entitled *The Paladión-Pound-Eliot Line*. The writers sitting below the salt in this title had appropriated no more than large chunks of everyone from Homer to Verlaine in their writings, but the master, with the irrefutable logic of farce, had simply annexed entire works. A better title might have been *The Paladión Era*.

So Pierre Menard, as I suggest above, is clearly not the only victim of this vicious frivolity. The true victim is whatever we mean when we speak of "modernity" in literature—what Nabokov has wittily called the "post-Baudelaire age." Like Nabokov, with whom Borges is so often mentioned, to their mutual chagrin, Borges the "modernist" is nothing if not a preterist. His imagination operates at the very frontier of what is new in our conception of art, but his temperament, his soul, belongs to the distant past (or perhaps one should say to that atemporal sphere in which all of high culture exists without regard for the trivialities of calendrical time). Self-parody is made possible, or perhaps necessary, by the fact that his temperament seems scandalized by his imagination.

One of the frontiers of art today is certainly that borderline verbo-visual activity called "conceptual." Borges strikes me as very close to if not indeed an influential precursor of this movement.

Consider the accomplishment of an acquaintance of mine here at Princeton a few years ago. Aaron Marcus posted in a graphics exhibit an account of how he had described a great figure X across the map of the United States by placing a long-distance conference call to public telephone booths, previously selected as dots on the two intersecting lines of the figure. When chance passers-by had eventually answered all the rings, the art work was, in a vertiginous instant of time, complete. Nothing could be more compatible with Borges' habit of imagination, as revealed in his greatest work, nor more subject to his ridicule in these lampoons.

Take for instance the Brotherhood Movement, a discovery of Attorney G.A. Baralt, which he outlined in six universally unread volumes published between 1947-1954 (one falls helplessly into the game). Brotherhoods are "secret societies . . . whose members are not only unknown to each other, but who may, at any given moment, change their status." This is so because a brotherhood consists of all the people in the world who share *any* given characteristic: those with Catalan surnames, for example, or, a more ephemeral group, those who happen at any given moment to be attacked by a cigarette cough while wearing baggy trousers. Once you master the cough, of course, you pass into the brotherhood of those who are merely wearing baggy trousers, and so on. Baralt's goal was a compendium of all the conceivable brotherhoods in the world, a *ne plus ultra* absurdity that gives rise to a kind of metaphysical shudder. Tolstoi had but would never quite have admitted to such an ambition.

It is obviously a book for a specialized taste, but I do not think it necessary (and one could hardly pay the parodist a higher compliment) that one know the immediate original, Borges' fiction. I should think it indispensable, however, that one know the larger original, which is nothing less than the Western literary tradition in the first half of the 20th century. The percentage of laughs per line is not quite that of a Neil Simon or a Woody Allen, but Honorio Bustos

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Domecq is a contender. I took early reading notes for this review on a small tape recorder, and I can only report that strangled laughter frequently made the message so garbled as to be useless.

Clarence Brown

Clarence Brown is professor of comparative literature at Princeton.

The Canfield Decision by Spiro T. Agnew

(Playboy; $8.95)

In 1972 I wrote a TV column entitled "1983" for this magazine, in which I indulged my taste for black humor and described an America that had been presided over for seven years, as of 1983, by one Spiro Agnew. This year I am reprinting the piece in a collection of my essays and reviews, on the theory that my 1983 prophecy is funnier now, inadvertently, than it was in 1972, since it is now so clearly, beyond its blackness, bone-headed. But only this last week I have been reading Mr. Agnew's new novel (*The Canfield Decision*, which is being panned or ignored everywhere) and have decided that my 1972 column must have been a sort of black inspiration for him. Why? The novel takes place in 1983. Where else could the inspirational conception of 1983 have been derived?

Well, if I did inspire him I apologize to him, now, for attributing to him, then, an America that nobody would wish on anybody. At the time I was doing battle with the Republicans *and* the media, and it was (and is) a hard combination to make sense of. (I am still trying.) I did not *mean* to send him off to write a thriller that describes an America that nobody would wish on anybody, but only to point to the dangers of media powers in the absence of sensible restraints on media conditioning, an absence that naturally I was trying to blame on the Republicans. But now here comes Mr. Agnew's thriller, blaming the troubles of America on the media and the *liberals*, a slight political displacement for which I forgive him.

Of course his book is a fiction, not the memoir he promises us (one unhappy editorial writer said of the novel that he was not going to put down $8.95 for it, but would await the memoir), and therefore a questionable place to look for unfictional political opinions. In fact Mr. Agnew goes to some lengths in the book to muddy the party allegiances of his major characters, and he has as his hero a Vice President who turns out not to be Mr. Agnew, and not a hero at all, but a sort of late-blooming liberal villain. When I say "late-blooming" I mean that his villainy is late-blooming, since, as I understand Canfield, the big decision that he makes—the decision from which the book derives its title—is not, or not originally, one of evil intent. The decision is to go one step beyond the President himself in recommending military assistance to Israel, and is made honestly at the time but turns out to be a most opportune decision politically, improving Canfield's chances for the presidency. Then, as the novel progresses, Canfield's own native opportunism begins to take over his thinking, until he comes to neglect the ideology of his decision entirely, and to think only of his political future. Now such a character is what is sometimes called an unreliable narrator, since we see a good deal of the novel's action through his eyes but are not sure—not until quite late in the novel—how to relate his opinions to his creator's; but he is not thereby a poorly drawn character. To the contrary he is, at least for me, one of the strengths of the novel, and I see a lot of his creator in him even as I see his creator leading him down the garden path. He is not, however, *politically* of the same dispensation as his creator. The creator's politics are, I assume deliberately, elusive in the novel, and while the prime minister of Malaysia seems to have been given a good (and somewhat scary) hunk of the true Agnew foreign policy in a straight-talk speech near the end, even that speech is heavily conditioned by the context. For a book written by a political warhorse the book's focus remains, to a remarkable degree, upon the character, as distinguished from the political opinions, of Canfield. The focus is on the character, and on how the character is led astray.

And *how* is he led astray? Well, he is dragged into a few do-gooder projects, and into a nearly cataclysmic, James Bond bit of nuclear-warhead rattling, but even these excesses are not, as it were, native to the man. No, he is presented as basically a moderate, civilized pragmatist (like his creator?), one who knows that each of the issues he deals with has a hundred tentacles to it that have to be fended off. In the early stages of the book he keeps the tentacles off with skill, and only when he is *pushed*, of course, by the Press.

Naturally it is not only the Press that pushes. Every man pushes himself to high places, and Mr. Agnew does not neglect the v.p.'s own dreams of power; yet the Press' influence upon Canfield is rendered, throughout the book, as an inescapable enormity. As a result the book, though meant to be a thriller mainly (more at the end than at the beginning), does have a message in it that keeps sitting bleakly on stage, and the message is that the Press is the heavy, not Canfield.

And of course it is this message that the Press itself—as it now reviews and editorializes about the book—chooses not to understand. The Press finds the book simply full of sour grapes.

A journalist named David Braaten, reviewing the book for *The Washington Star*, said characteristically that it was badly written, tediously slow-paced, and devoid of ideas. Well, it is not badly written, though some of the dialogue is corny à la James Bond. And if it is slow-paced it is so because of the unusual amount of time, for a thriller, devoted to developing Canfield's motivation and the Press influence upon him, matters that are handled with both intelligence and conviction, the conviction coming straight out of the creator's own experience. As for the absence of ideas, no again. The book is loaded with ideas. I wouldn't pay a nickel for some of them but they are there, and the controlling idea—about Press power—*is*, it seems to me, a formidable idea, an idea for liberals as well as conservatives to reckon with. It is the opposite idea to the one that makes *All the President's Men* tick, the idea that journalists play David to the establishment Goliath. For Mr. Agnew the journalists are Goliath, and there ain't no David around yet.

Such an idea has trouble passing *as* an idea among journalists, but for Mr. Agnew it is clearly obsessive. In his whole book he portrays only one Press good guy, a wise old drunk. The rest of the journalists and commentators are arrogant, insensitive, stupid, unobservant, hypocritical and self-serving. They go around in herds like sheep. They lie, they cheat, they betray trusts. They are incapable of independent thought. They assume that every politico must bare his soul to them at any hour. And as talking heads on the Sunday shows they pontificate (in one of the funniest passages of the book) rudely, pompous-

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ly, irritatedly, snidely, paternally and tiredly.

And they run, according to this script, America.

I confess that I haven't much time for the conspiratorial view of national and international affairs that seems to lurk behind the book. Writing a thriller breeds such a view of course, but probably the genre wouldn't have been chosen if the view hadn't been there first. I remember being similarly worried by a thriller written by Pierre Salinger after his days with JFK, and wondering, My God, does James Bond run the White House? But I will say for Mr. Agnew's book that in his creating of the character of Canfield he has gone beyond the genre, and gone beyond the conspiratorial view. And in his handling of the Press he has been, though obsessed, much more than a James Bond. He has been an ex-Vice President writing out of a very bad experience, and writing convincingly of it.

Reed Whittemore

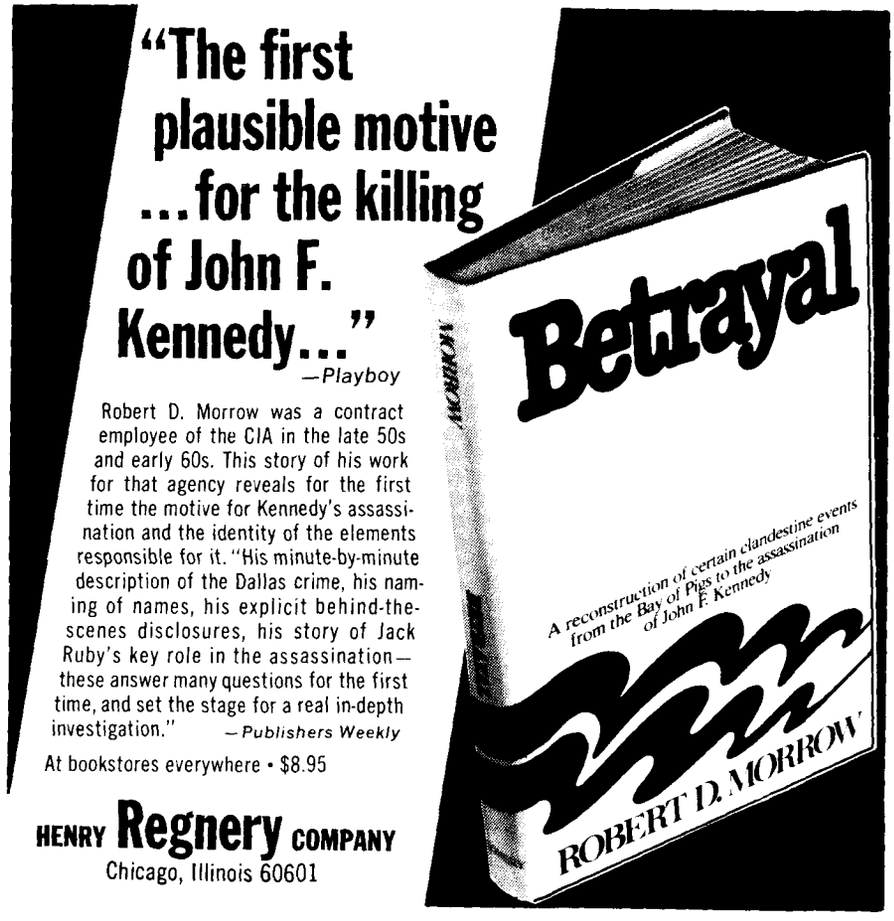
Saving the Queen
by William F. Buckley, Jr.

(Doubleday; $7.95)

In his first foray into spy fiction, William F. Buckley, Jr. has written what at first glance appears to be a unique book: the first espionage story ever posed in the terms of a drawing-room comedy. At second glance it appears to be a good bit more. The result is that mixture of cynicism and idealism that often marks the good conservative, whether it be Edmund Burke, Russell Kirk or Buckley himself. A Kennedy conservative like myself finds it all a bit ambivalent.

The plot is straightforward enough. So are the autobiographical elements, upon which most reviewers no doubt will comment. The hero—for such he shiningly is—is one Blackford Oakes, Yale '51, resident of Davenport College; Oakes is clearly much admired by Buckley, Yale '50, resident of Davenport College, for Oakes has dashing good looks, has graduated *magna cum laude* and read admiringly both *God and Man at Yale* and Buckley and Bozell on Sen. McCarthy, and thinks that the free world's last best hope rests with America. Oakes is recruited into the CIA through a message passed by a registrar's assistant in the college, and after modest training, he finds himself in London, operating under a foundation cover, there to attempt to discover how Britain's nuclear secrets (and thus America's) are being leaked to the Russians. As Garry Wills has demonstrated, in a cunningly conceived article in the *New York Review of Books*, Buckley too was recruited directly into the CIA, and he too went under cover (although in Latin America, not London). Still Wills' piece goes on to show interesting conceptual and emotional linkages between OSS, MI-6, and even the British Colonial Office, and the CIA, and these links suggest congruencies between Oakes and Buckley too obvious to ignore. So much, however, for autobiography, for while it is interesting to read *Saving the Queen* as Buckley's *apologia* (or as another chapter in one of his continuing feuds), it is surely fairer to the author to read it for what it also most obviously is, a first attempt at fiction, a better than average spy yarn, and a bid for the next Robert Redford vehicle.

Oakes soon traces the leakage to the Palace, and eventually directly to the Queen of England, Caroline, a sprightly and entirely engaging figure who is at least the match for the boyish Oakes. Here two paths converge, the sub-plot of a caning unfairly administered on the young Oakes as a pupil at England's Greyburn College providing further justification for bedding the Queen. In the course of making his way into the Royal Personage, Oakes discovers the source of the leak, reflects upon English education, its upper class, and its waning empire, tricks his mother and stepfather, fights an aerial duel (for naturally this Yale graduate is a top flight pilot), and twice visits a most improbable French whorehouse. During the course of laying out this plot, which is not really meant to be convincing, Buckley has several opportunities to show his skill as a debater, to take jesuitical (in the best sense of the word) positions on numerous world issues, and to display his knowledge of court protocol or the layout of Windsor Great Park. (Reviewers have remarked on the last, which is in fact the least interesting, for anyone who has passed a week in embassy circles will know the protocol, and the archives at Windsor, as well as the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park, are well known to most Americans who profess British history.) While the dalliance with the Queen might be distasteful (and will be felt to be so by some British reviewers), Buckley shows her sufficiently unregal and removed from reality as to make the whole affair merely a rather good, if perhaps sophomoric, college joke. In fine, the book is a good read, and one hopes that Buckley may try his hand at this sort of thing again.

But not, please, with the oh-so-perfect Oakes, for he has served his purpose. That purpose is clear enough: to remind us all of those bright college years when it somehow seemed right, indeed honorable, to lie for one's country. Oakes . . .

> *felt himself curiously affected by the invisible network being managed at one end by Joseph Stalin, the principal agent—now that Hitler was gone—of human misery; and, at the other, by Washington, DC, a network of its own, protective of human freedoms in design, but, also, necessarily engaged in the same kind of business: lying, stealing, intimidating, blackmailing, intercepting.* . . . Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi. . . . *[The aphorism] could be used in defense of indefensible propositions, nevertheless, correctly applied, it was unchallengeable: That which it is permitted for Jove to do is not necessarily permitted for a cow to do. We might in secure conscience lie and steal in order to secure the escape of human beings from misery or death; Stalin had no right to lie and steal in order to bring misery and death to others. Yet, viewed without paradigmatic moral coordinates, simpletons would say, simply:* Both sides lied and cheated—*a plague on both their houses.*

The message here is clear enough today. Ends do sometimes justify means. One fights fire with fire. Motivation counts. Ambivalence is all.

What Buckley has done is attempt to take us back to the years when the very institutions that provided the CIA with its most likely officers, the same institutions that today provide its most vocal critics, were themselves still clear on such issues, before the confusions, the betrayals of honor, the erosion of moral imperatives brought upon us by the last decade had occurred. Consider: it was just as Britain lost its Empire, lost its ability to blindly defend past principles, lost its position of world leadership, that the British spy novel turned from the heroics of a Richard Hannay or the moral certitudes of those who saw Duty as all, to the moral gray areas of John le Carré. The spy came in from the cold as those values that had held his predecessors in the cold were taken as hollow; the game was no longer worth the candle, the nation no longer worth the sacrifice, the girl no longer a virgin, the villain no longer the embodiment of evil. And where le Carré went, so went Len Deighton and Desmond Bagley, and their American imitators. A Britain without power was also a Britain without moral authority in the world.

Buckley, then, wishes to take his readers back to the days before the waters had been muddied, when nations still fought to save democracy (and cheated a little for the Higher Cause), when not only Yalies but entire nations were in their bright college years. And while this novel puts some blind defense of some blind positions into the mouths of some of its figures, there is no reason to believe that Buckley does not also recognize the ultimate ambivalence with which he deals: when these rather school boyish truths are no longer believed, when the cardboard heroes are no longer creditable, when we no longer know what to tell the children, are we the morally better for it (no doubt) while also the more vulnerable for it (again, no doubt), and where do the trade-offs lie? When individuals appeal to the Higher Law to justify their actions, whose Higher Law is it to which they appeal?

Robin W. Winks

Robin W. Winks is professor of history at Yale and was cultural attaché to the American Embassy in London.

The West End Horror by Nicholas Meyer

(Dutton; $7.95)

I hope Nicholas Meyer never stops writing Sherlock Holmes pastiches because he does it so much better than anyone else, but I wish he'd made haste a little more slowly on this one. His first novel in the genre, *The Seven Per Cent Solution*, was about as good as such a book could get—better, in fact, than a lot of later Doyle—and I confess that I'm looking forward to the movie with an avidity that has rocked my marriage to its very foundations. Not only did it finally release the detective from the frivolous grip of August Derleth, but it demonstrated that human beings were still as good as rabbits when it came to heroism.

As with so many of our better qualities, the 20th century has been less than kind to our perception of courage and honor. World War I took care of personal valor by rendering it meaningless. Yet we hunger for heroism still, just as we hunger for the solace of our lost religion, and it is a longing that springs from something more urgent than the promptings of the child within us: like all men in all ages, we want to be given something worthwhile to live for, we want to think well of ourselves. These are not ignoble longings but they subsist on short commons these days, furtively and at a considerable remove from the topics of sober conversation. Like a secret vice, they express themselves in code, in music and fantasy—Watership Down and Middle Earth, the deeps of interstellar space and the sagebrush steppes and overfurnished drawing rooms of an era that became a myth while it still remained a memory. Perhaps the transformation was inevitable in any event. Heroism, by its very nature, requires a large but relatively empty canvas and a small, isolated population (for which the British upper middle class will do very well) sharing a common code of behavior. Not only is the hero thus made more conspicuous, but his deeds are freed from a certain carping ambiguity.

For the above reasons, Sherlock Holmes may very well be the last universal hero we shall have until Arthur wakes in Glastonbury. Courage, stamina, intellect and prowess are qualities shared by saint and scoundrel alike, but the hero must work to earn his spurs. Specifically, he must not only rise above himself but also experience a kind of kingly death, as Doyle's Holmes did both by implication and in fact at the Reichenbach Fall and as Meyer's Holmes did by conquering his cocaine addiction (with a little help from Watson and Freud) and by riding off into the sunset of self-exile at the end. It would be silly to make too much of these stories, but it would be a mistake to dismiss them out of hand. It is true that they are little more than fantastic entertainments of a very high order, bearing about as much relation to objective reality as a telecast of a dream, but it is equally true that a

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fictional creating betraying such alarming vigor on the eve of its 99th birthday must be granted something more than mere staying power. It is therefore a double pity that Nicholas Meyer, having hit the mark once, has now opted for burlesque and facile sensation.

In *The West End Horror*, Sherlock Holmes is engaged by George Bernard Shaw to solve the murder of a prominent drama critic and notorious cad. Shaw's interest in the case is obscure to the point of flippancy, and it is hard to escape the feeling that the unhappy victim has been arranged on the carpet for the sole purpose of introducing the reader to the vanished glories of theatrical London—oh, there's another reason, too, but anyone who remembers the plot of *Bunny Lake is Missing* will have little trouble in unravelling it; Holmes, who missed the movie, takes a while longer. Anyway, in less time than it takes to say "I've got a little list" celebrities begin descending like parachutists. In short order we meet Gilbert and Sullivan, Ellen Terry, Oscar Wilde, Bram Stoker, Henry Irving, D'Oyly Carte and Frank Harris. And a sparkling company they make, well worth the price of admission, which is more than can be said for the guys playing Holmes, Watson, and Lestrade, who frequently sound like refugees from a Sesame Street production of *Cookie Monster of the Baskervilles*. Moreover, since we know that none of the *real* people can possibly have committed the crime (although things briefly look black for Bram Stoker) and the red herrings are swiftly identified as such, the identity of the killer becomes crystal clear the moment he and Meyer simplify matters with a second murder.

The writer of a pastiche labors under constraints that become intolerable the moment he begins to take himself seriously. He has inherited someone else's creation and someone else's style, and the only freedom allowed him is a restrained playfulness—the reader wants new plots but he wants the same Holmes, and he wants him described in the voice of a man who has been dead for 46 years. Unless one treats the undertaking as a form of re-creation, the whole thing comes to resemble a stupefying kind of demonic possession, with unconsious parody the inevitable result, as it is here. Heroes are good to have and Holmes is certainly one of the best; but it is wise never to take them too seriously; if we forget that there is something a trifle ridiculous about them, they are likely to begin to take on airs. It should be borne in mind that Doyle had excellent reasons for pitching Holmes into that waterfall, and he never forgave him for crawling out of it.

L.J. Davis

L.J. Davis' most recent novel is *Walking Small* (Braziller).

The Dangerous Edge by Gavin Lambert

(Grossman; $7.95)

From two decades' experience as a critic, scenarist, director and novelist, Gavin Lambert arrived at the fribbling theory in the preface to *On Cukor* (1972) that there are two kinds of artists, those whose work assuages personal tensions and those whose work is a sunny *ex*tension of curiosity and delight. Filmmaker George Cukor is one of the latter type, and *On Cukor* is an amiable salute. In his new, dark and analytical book, *The Dangerous Edge*, Lambert canvasses nine of the former type, tension-relievers—eight novelists, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton, John Buchan, Eric Ambler, Graham Greene, Georges Simenon and Raymond Chandler, and one filmmaker, Alfred Hitchcock.

The nine, or eight plus one, "share one obsession. They have all been driven to interpret life in terms of melodrama," a literary genre limned by Chandler as "an exaggeration of violence and fear." The torments palliated only by creative work at "the dangerous edge" of criminality are engendered in youth, according to Lambert's classical psychoanalytic hypothesis. To spend a lifetime conveying fear, one must have thrilled to its seductive powers early on, as well as to those of its consorts, guilt and punishment.

Besides obsession the authors share isolation whether by physical oddity, political exile or poverty; adherence to or reaction against Catholicism or Calvinism; a rich and morbid fantasy life; and indulgence in engulfing make-believe that permits the author to conclude his yarn by transubstantiation, not into Christ, but into a criminal.

Revealing *dramatis personae* is the nub of Lambert's literary criticism as well as his biographical writing. He epitomizes each author with a quotation selected from a book or interview and then labors assiduously to show the validity of his choice both for the imagined lives on the printed pages and the real lives imprinted by the traumas of youth. For example,

> *A child was crying in a tenement . . . too young to have learnt what the dark may conceal in the way of lust and murder, crying for no intelligible reason but because it still possessed the ancestral fear, the devil was dancing in its sleep.*

That fanciful projection by Graham Greene into the psyche of a Liberian infant (*Journey without Maps*) sets the stage for Lambert's appraisal of Greene himself. Children never recover from scarifying experiences. "Greene never recovers either, but grows up into a novelist."

The analogies go from the facile to the dubious by way of the gratuitous. As the headmaster's son, Greene belonged to "the wrong side" at school. He writes novels about double agents. Georges Simenon visited Russia, Lapland, India and Tahiti before World War II. For his Inspector Maigret each case is "like a journey into a new country, with its own topography and habits . . ."

Hammering away at predatory parents; the stickery Christ-*cum*-Freud trident of sin, pain and pardon; and the haps and mishaps of youth, whose only commonality is their uncommonality, reveals (trivially) that all authors have parents of some particular stripe and that, when you get right down to it, any statistic rendered as case studies yields atypical variations from the norms of the nuclear family. The conclusions are simply figments of the method.

Simenon's widowed mother's *petit bourgeois* terror of poverty yields the trend toward conservatism in successive Maigret novels, while Chandler's upbringing in a household dominated by his mother and her mother (the trite, unspoken, sexist assumption being there is something inescapably hurtful about that state of affairs) engenders anxieties that are relieved through his portraying women as *femmes fatales*.

Yet for Hitchcock, about whom the smothering mother hypothesis might have been more than suggestive given the recurrence of weird mother-child relationships in *Notorious, The Paradine Case, Strangers on a Train, Psycho, The Birds* and *Marnie* and the persistent, "sick" transformation of diverse actresses into "Hitchcock blondes,"

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culminating in *Vertigo*, where that transformation is central to the plot itself, Lambert relies on an apochryphal anecdote about five-year-old Alfred's being locked for jest in prison for a quarter-hour to foretaste the cup of naughty children.

In addition Lambert offers this: a vivid description of the shower scene in *Psycho* and the titillating insight that "for many years Hitchcock finds something mysteriously satisfying in the image of a clean bathroom. ('When I take a bath, I put everything neatly back in its place. You wouldn't know I'd been in the bathroom.')"

In the chapter on Eric Ambler he notes that as the century unfolded the melodramatic problem ceased to be the Victorian one of restoring a superior moral order through detection and punishment (as it was for Collins, Conan Doyle, Chesterton and Buchan) but became the modern one of saving the protagonist from the internal contradictions of "a criminal and a policeman inside every human being." What makes retroactive Freudian analysis seem fruitful for analyzing melodrama, fictional or "true-life," is simply that Freudian theory is itself so melodramatic with its id/criminals and superego/cops. Obviously Lambert's premises and his psychoanalytic technique for demonstrating them are one and the same. *The Dangerous Edge* is a string of tautologies in which neither the psychological insinuations (all from secondary sources, none from original research) nor the literary criticism takes a clear lead.

Outlining the careers of melodramatists and criticizing the genre itself should not be the same task. Regarding the former, Lambert has not discovered the variables that make melodramatists akin to each other *and different from everybody else*. Regarding the latter, he has failed to "genre-alize." His is a kind of para-sociological criticism: he is willing to concede that some socializing influences are significant for artistic creation. At the same time, immersion in the conventions of the psychological novel, of which he has written five in addition to twice that many screenplays, extends his usual method of developing characters to the work of doing criticism.

It is only in his epilogue, and then too late, that Lambert hints at non-deductive hypotheses. Since so many melodramatic plots are derived from sensational newspaper items, beginning just at the time when newspapers and literacy were becoming commonplace, there is the element of exploitation to be considered. Furthermore, there are correlations among the waning of the Victorian era and "the Golden Age of English Murder," the rise of the modern, corporate state, the onset of the world wars, and the emergence of agnostic scientism and a new romanticism that wisely renders unto Caesar the coin of the rational realm but retains for Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown and Philip Marlowe the mysterious, Christian currency of the unconscious.

Mitch Tuchman

Mitch Tuchman is a free-lance film critic.

Bloodshed and Three Novellas by Cynthia Ozick

(Knopf; $6.95)

Cynthia Ozick could have been a scholar; a generation younger and she might have been a rabbi. What she has become, luckily for us, is a unique and challenging writer whose intellect is vivified by all the lively juices of a storyteller and a reveller in language. Most of Ozick's work is fraught with the tension between rationalist and holy thinker on the one hand, and tale-maker, invoker of magic and miracle on the other. "All that is not Law is levity" (or worse) quotes Ozick as dutiful Talmudist; "in magic all divergences are linked and locked." So the action of fiction and the action of magic are identical for her—both proceed by a confounding of instances, a perception of the hidden symmetry in creation's parts.

The title story of *Bloodshed* introduces a group of Hasidim who are storytellers, passionate celebrants and poets of survival. Into their midst she thrusts a hostile visitor named Bleilip who is a "mitnagid," representative of a wholly different strain of Judaism: "purist, skeptic, enemy of fresh revelation, enemy of the Hasidim." The story as story never works out, for reasons which Ozick well understands and acknowledges in a preface as lively as any of her tales.

I think the reason it fails is the direct result of that tension between passion and intellect, her own, which she tries to make into plot. Ozick has no trouble finding ideas for her stories, it's her inventive powers that are less reliable; the inhibition against tale-telling has taken its toll. What she sometimes lacks is the insane, trusting, necessary willingness of the truly relaxed natural tale-teller to let her characters walk off just out of hearing of her commands and live lives that might surprise her, almost as though she were one of her own readers. Her desires for these stories, and her overwhelming delight in conundra, at times overwhelm and inhibit them; then they move like Talmudic argument, not like stories on their way to a destination.

Let it be clear that Ozick's failures are infinitely more interesting than most writers' successes, and that is not meant to damn with faint praise. I take a great pleasure, page by page, in these earnest characters who go off into the kingdoms of abstraction in search of moral improvement or sanctification the way the youngest princes of fairy tales seek their fortunes: because they must. At the same time the flaws of overthink are so recognizable my heart warms to them—aren't my children the ones who say to me tenderly, "But if you're a writer, why can't you tell us good *stories*?" Ozick enjoys pretending that her stories—she is thinking of "Usurpation (Other People's Stories)" which a critic once baffled her by calling "tantalizing . . . technique as mystification"—are derived from a culture essentially lost to us, "the Jewish Idea" which considers story-making "a corridor to the corruptions and abominations of idol worship." The Jewish God, after all, is not to be seen, imagined or called forth in physical imminence through any arrangement of paint or stone, wine or wafer. And so she likes to concede that "Usurpation," this difficult and cunning box in which tale nestles within tale, real characters meld with ghosts, magic transformations befall, and her own voice speaks to the imaginings of her characters—and receives answers!—is only to be unlocked by others who have been shaped by the same tradition.

How odd, then, to have to deny her this elite self-limiting appeal to which she consigns herself: you don't have to be Jewish to like Ozick, nor to understand her. She has written before—see her famous story, "Envy"—about the isolation and the invitations to martyrdom of the purveyors of a disappearing language and culture—and she would like to pretend she has painted herself

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faithfully and willingly into that shrinking corner. But of course the dangers of the imagination, and the rationalist's refusal to float off into the merely possible, the implausible, finally the impossible, are more universal than that. Who, grown and educated in any intellectual tradition, does not resist dream and prophesy, which are beyond our control? Didn't Plato banish the poet from his state? Ozick, of course, knows this, just as the teller of the clever tale of the usurpation (of name and fame and body and soul among writers and others, shameless with vanity and lust) knows she is telling a story, five, 10 stories, and good ones too, and is guilty of idolatry, if such it be, from the first word. It's a game, full of the vestiges of real and serious rules but the ultimate disingenuous writer's game nonetheless. To alter Lawrence for the occasion: however much she may make it a tale of attempted repudiation, the teller cannot repudiate the tale. We hold the evidence of her failure in our hands and (I love a paradox as fiercely as Ozick) the failure is "Usurpation"'s success. It's a difficult, original and cryptic story, but it's not hermetic.

The earliest novella in *Bloodshed*, "An Education" (1964) was written in a period of a different kind of self-consciousness. It is more ordinary, far easier of access, a moral tale prevented at the last from becoming an exemplum. Una, a graduate student adrift in search of some focus for her devotion, enslaves herself, for what she takes to be her own good, to a couple so perfect and so horrid simultaneously that they are almost but not quite unbelievable. She is saved, or at least cut adrift again, by a suitor who promises to take her to bed—another education—if, like Hansel's witch locking the door to his cage, he can only fatten her up to make her a succulent meal. The story has a gargantuan quality to it, the characters, though they move from meal to work to sleep, are like giant airfilled puppets creating force fields on a stage. Just as the reader begins to turn from the obviousness of it all, there comes a turning and we confront the author smiling at us. Una in the end eludes all the snares that await her; she is only a slower learner than we are. The story is funny and occasionally wise but it is not what Ozick is best at: it is neither subtle nor intellectually audacious.

For those qualities read "Usurpation," which like Grace Paley's wonderful but relatively transparent "A Conversation With My Father," seems to be written before our eyes; and read the outrageous, lush, self-parodying "A Mercenary." At the risk of affront, "Usurpation" is to "A Mercenary" what a tortured investigation of the pros and cons of holding hands might be to a no-holds-barred three-day orgy. Ozick has looked the dangers of fiction in their bloodshot rolling eye and has consented. She manages to give us lovingly nasty portraits of two expatriates running in a circle, one in exile from the uncomfortable memory of his Jewishness in Poland—he is "paid mouthpiece" now to a small African country—and the other a native of that country ill-at-ease in New York, "a city of Jews." Both men are absurd and both are haunted; of the two of them it is Lushinski the diplomat who is most and least powerful at the same time. He makes his enigmatic diplomatic maneuvers; adjusts to, even justifies, callous wars fostered in his little country to raise the prices of its crops; considers himself an African though his familiarity with the place appears to be a dream out of *Henderson the Rain King* ("Herons, plumage, a red stalk of bird-leg in an unmoving pool, mahogany nakedness and golden collars, drums, black bodies, the women with their hooped lips . . .") and enjoys turning his back on the Israeli ambassador in the Assembly. His mistress can arouse him by summoning him to terror; by calling him "Jew." Finally his assistant, the lonely African, begins to understand the nature of Lushinski's impersonation. So do we, and that's all that happens. But the story is a complex, bitterly amusing, word-rich creation of that personality. It balances phony exotic tale-mongering with the dead-earnest silences of a man denying his history. We end up following the tracks of a lifelong conspirator against himself.

Ozick's stories make discussions of "female" *v.* "male" experience seem puerile and irrelevant. Half of these are told from "male" perspectives. They turn out to be works conceived at a level—philosophic, sub species historic—that makes those distinctions too arbitrary to be indulged. Distinctions between usurper and idolator, lawkeeper and tale-teller are more basic and more timeless, and—whatever Ozick's ancestors might have done with us in *shul*—they do not separate us by sex.

Rosellen Brown

Rosellen Brown's newest novel is *The Autobiography of My Mother* (Doubleday).

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Correspondence

Evildoer

To the editors:
I read the editorial *Henry's Successor* (*TNR*, May 8) with amazement at the moral insensitivity that typifies certain intellectuals. Granted, Mr. Kissinger's superiority over the rest of that Eastern foreign policy group, granted their weakness, granted their rather pitiful hunger for power—there is still a basic distinction to be made: Mr. Kissinger has been responsible for the bombing and burning of hundreds and thousands of innocent people, not through weakness but through strength and conviction; Mr. Kissinger has time and time again lied and misled, and even been angered that he should in any way be held accountable to the people of this country. The others may be contemptible, but Mr. Kissinger is, it seems to me, criminal. The distinction that the editorial fails to draw is between weakness and outright evil. And all because he has a more acute mind. At the moment of judgment, his mind is irrelevant.

Max Palevsky
Los Angeles, California

Moynihan and Blacks

To the editors:
It is not Orwellian "inversion" which characterizes blacks' views of Moynihan but rather Orwellian Newspeak which is the appropriate label for Gershman's apologia ("A Bum Rap?" *TNR*, April 10) for him. That Gershman wrote it is no surprise; that *The New Republic* published it is puzzling. One would have thought that William Ryan's *Blaming the Victim* would have laid to rest any claim of Moynihan's beneficence toward blacks. But perhaps we do better to cite Moynihan himself in answer to Gershman. To quote Gershman, "Moynihan placed greatest emphasis on the need for more jobs for the poor, making the government the employer of last resort. . . ." But on April 4, 1976, Moynihan opposed "the government's acting as employer of last resort. . . ." (*The New York Times*, April 5, 1976) Perhaps the shill and the subject need to get their story straight!

Alan Gartner
New York, New York

In reply:
Alan Gartner's letter is appreciated, if only because it offers a useful illustration of how Daniel P. Moynihan's views are distorted by his opponents.

According to Gartner, Moynihan was quoted in the *Times* as opposing the government acting as employer of last resort. In fact, Moynihan is for the proposal, just as he was for it in the mid-1960s, which was the period I was referring to in my article. Gartner took the quote entirely out of context, for in the same *Times* article it says that Moynihan "emphasized Senator Jackson's commitment to jobs, the provision of which he called 'the first duty of government.'" All that he expressed "skepticism" about was the proposal to give priority at this point to government job creation programs over the need to get the economy working at full capacity.

Moynihan's view is that after the tremendous idle capacity of the economy is put in use, a step that would create millions of productive jobs, the government should then step in with employment and job training programs which would guarantee a job to everyone who is looking for work but cannot find it. That is what is meant by the concept of the government as employer of *last* resort.

Carl Gershman

Straw Persons

To the editors:
Who precisely are this Ruth and David who sit around holding votes on their children's sex lives ("Liberalism Isn't Dead," *TNR*, April 17)? Are they really so typical, if they exist at all, that they may be said to "personalize" American liberals in general? The silliness and confusion they exhibit reflect the same sort of ideological vagueness that Henry Fairlie himself demonstrates in his strange analysis. His point on the failure to recognize the economic basis of social problems is well taken, but surely it has characterized liberal ideology from its earliest stages and is not a recent aberration. Liberalism *is*, no matter how much nonsense we read about a "glow" or just plain folks "decency," an ideology. And if any of its tenets is truly a "value worth keeping" in our era, that value is a concern with civil liberties. Civil libertarianism is far from "trendy and permissive," as Fairlie would have it; on the contrary, it is quite unpopular these days to admit that pornography and pot are not ruining America, that in fact they have no relevance to our nation's severe social problems, and that dictation of an acceptable lifestyle to others is tyranny, not respect for traditional values. If civil libertarianism puts people off, then so much the worse for the future of this democracy. The response of liberals should be to explain their values more clearly to the public, not to blur or repudiate them. Poor Ruth and David are not only creatures of Mr. Fairlie's fantasy life but straw men.

Kathleen Callahan Martin
Waltham, Massachusetts

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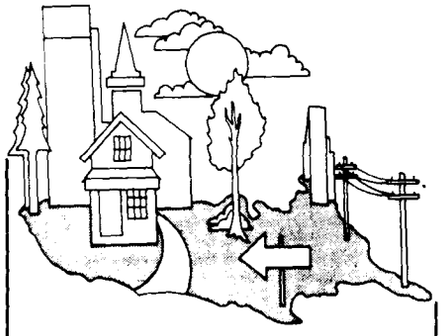

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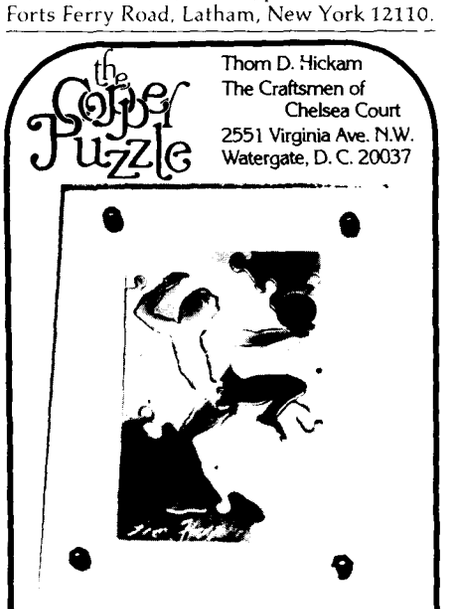

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